

# Boren Scholarship and Fellowship Survey

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October 2014



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## Abstract

The Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) funds Boren Scholarships and Fellowships for undergraduate and graduate students abroad to improve their cultural and language skills in areas critical to national security. In exchange for financial assistance, students must to work for the Federal Government for one year after completing the program. DLNSEO asked CNA to evaluate the Boren program by developing and administering a survey to former awardees to identify where they work now and how the Boren Award may have influenced their career paths. Our results indicate that Boren Scholars and Fellows feel that the skills and perspectives gained through the Boren program have been highly influential in their careers. We also found that those who start their employment in the Federal Government tend to stay there and that 40 percent of respondents are currently employed (or had a last known position) in the Federal Government.

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## Executive Summary

As a key component of the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) within the Office of the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, the National Security Education Program (NSEP) administers Boren Scholarships and Fellowships for students to study abroad to improve their language and culture skills in areas critical to national security. In exchange for financial assistance, students are required to work for the Federal Government for a minimum of one year upon completion of the program. This obligation is called the service requirement.

The service requirement has been changed, per legislation, numerous times since the program's inception; therefore, award recipients from different years have different requirements. For example, from 1994 to 2004, federal employment and employment in an institution of higher education were weighted equally in terms of preference to fulfill the requirement. From 2005 to 2006, the priority shifted to employment within four priority areas: the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and State, or within the Intelligence Community. In 2007, this legislation was broadened to include other federal departments and agencies with national security responsibilities.

Award recipients from 2008 to present are required to first search for positions in the four priority areas of government mentioned above. If they are unable to secure work in one of these areas, they can search anywhere in the Federal Government for positions with national security responsibilities. As a final option, award recipients may fulfill their service in education.

Per legislation, finding employment to fulfill the service requirement is the Boren Scholar or Fellow's responsibility. To assist in this process, however, NSEP works with federal agencies to educate them on Boren Awards and the special hiring authorities afforded to awardees of the program. NSEP's active outreach efforts to federal agencies and support to awardees in finding positions is a relatively recent effort, beginning around 2008.

While the Schedule A hiring authority—which allows awardees to be hired for federal positions without competition for a period of up to four years—was introduced in 1997, the second set of hiring authorities was not introduced until much later. The National Defense Authorization Acts (NDAAs) for FY 2010 [1] and FY 2013 [2] allow for any federal agency with national security responsibilities to noncompetitively appoint an NSEP award recipient to the excepted service and later convert that appointee to career or career-conditional status in the competitive service.

## Goal of the survey

DLNSEO asked CNA to examine the Boren program by identifying where alumni currently work, the influence of the Boren program on their career paths, and how their careers have developed since completing their service requirements. To gather input from Boren alumni, CNA developed and fielded a survey to Boren Scholars and Fellows who have completed their service requirement and subsequently analyzed the data collected. This document presents our analysis of the survey's results.

## Key findings

### Influence of skills and perspectives gained as a Boren Scholar or Fellow

We asked respondents if they felt that the Boren Scholarship or Fellowship had helped them obtain their service requirement position. We examined responses from 1994 to 2004 and from 2005 to 2012 to see if responses changed over time.

- We found that 40 percent of respondents from the 1994–2004 year group strongly agree or agree that the Boren Scholarship or Fellowship helped them obtain their service requirement positions, while 60 percent of respondents from the 2005–2012 year group strongly agree or agree.

We also asked respondents how influential they felt the skills and perspectives gained as a Boren Scholar or Fellow had been on their career paths. We learned that most found each of the following skills and perspectives to be influential or very influential on their career paths:

- Seventy-six percent of respondents found the skills acquired overseas through the Boren program, such as language and regional proficiency, to be influential or very influential on their career paths.
- Fifty-two percent of respondents found the increased awareness and commitment to U.S. national security to be influential or very influential on their career paths.
- Seventy-five percent found the increased awareness and commitment to international affairs to be influential or very influential on their career paths.
- Seventy-six percent found the self-assurance in position as a global citizen acquired overseas to be influential or very influential on their career paths.



- Fifty-nine percent found the self-assurance to be a consensus builder and partner influential or very influential on their career paths.

## Influence of resources gained as a Boren Scholar or Fellow

### *Use of NSEP office and assistance to awardees seeking employment*

We found that Boren Scholars and Fellows have increased their use of the NSEP office significantly when seeking employment since the early years of the program.

- While only 27 percent of respondents who received their Boren Award in the 1994–1998 year group indicated using the NSEP office for assistance when seeking employment after completing the Boren program, 60 percent in the 2008–2012 year group indicated using the NSEP office as a resource.

This increase is likely due, in part, to the increased involvement and support provided by the NSEP office in recent years. As we heard in interviews with alumni and in discussions with NSEP staff, the office has been more heavily engaged with award recipients in helping them find positions to fulfill their service requirement in recent years. In addition, the NSEP office now regularly hosts career fairs with both federal and non-federal employers and works to educate employers on the Boren program and the special hiring authorities afforded to Boren Scholars and Fellows.

### *Special hiring authorities*

Regarding Boren Scholars and Fellows' special hiring authorities (Schedule A and NDAA's of 2010 and 2013), we found that:

- The percentage of respondents who utilized the special hiring authorities when securing their service requirement position increased from 11 percent in the 1994–2004 year group to 24 percent in the 2005–2012 year group.
- Twenty-five percent of respondents found the special hiring authorities to be very influential or influential, while 69 percent found them to be only somewhat influential or not influential on their career paths.

Note that many respondents to this survey would not have had access to the pivotal hiring authorities introduced in NDAA 10 and NDAA 13. In addition, some respondents may not have been aware of the special hiring authorities that were available to them or if they were used at the time they were seeking employment or on-boarding into their federal position.

Further, as supported in the survey's open-ended question responses, while some respondents attempted to use the special hiring authorities when seeking

employment, they found various impediments. For example, some found employers to have a lack of knowledge about how to use the special hiring authorities, or they found employers to be unable to hire during the civilian hiring freeze, which has been in place across the Federal Government in recent years.

### *Other resources*

We also asked respondents how much they felt that Boren Award name recognition, networking opportunities, and access to the Boren Forum (the alumni organization for Scholars and Fellows) influenced their career paths. We found that respondents did not find the resources gained as a Boren awardee to be as influential as the skills and perspectives they gained:

- Seventy percent found Boren Award name recognition to be only somewhat influential or not influential on their career paths.
- Sixty-seven percent found the networking opportunities gained a result of the Boren program to be only somewhat influential or not influential.
- Seventy-eight percent found access to the Boren Forum to be only somewhat influential or not influential.

Regarding Boren name recognition, open-ended comments on the survey suggest that it is improving and depends on the federal agency. Other comments suggest, however, that Boren name recognition is not on par with the Office of Management and Budget's Presidential Management Fellowship or the Department of State's Fulbright program. Better branding should make the use of Boren Scholars' and Fellows' hiring authorities more effective.

## First post-Boren position in the Federal Government

A major goal of the Boren program is for Scholars and Fellows to secure positions in the Federal Government. For this reason, we looked at Scholars and Fellows who began their careers in the Federal Government and we examined their career paths.

- Of the 191 respondents who listed their first post-Boren position as employment with the Federal Government, 49 percent were still employed with the original agency; 51 percent had left their first position in the Federal Government for another position.
- Of those respondents who indicated that they had left their first Federal Government position, 52 percent indicated that their next position was in the Federal Government.

These data seem to indicate that respondents who started in the Federal Government tended to stay in the Federal Government, even if they moved on to a different federal agency. If the intent of the Boren program is for Scholars and Fellows to have careers in the Federal Government, these data suggest that NSEP should concentrate on helping awardees secure a first position in the Federal Government.

## Current or most recent employment

At present, NSEP tracks Boren Scholars and Fellows through their service requirement position only. One goal of this survey was to determine where they are currently employed. We found that:

- 40 percent of respondents listed a current or most recent position in the Federal Government, followed by 20 percent of respondents who indicated a current or most recent position in an educational institution.
- Of the 220 respondents who indicated that their current or most recent position was with the Federal Government, 34 percent have a current or most recent position with the Department of State, followed by 22 percent with the Department of Defense, 7 percent with the U.S. Agency for International Development, 6 percent with the Department of Homeland Security, 4 percent with the Central Intelligence Agency, and 3 percent with the Intelligence Community (unspecified).<sup>1</sup>

We also asked those with a current position in the Federal Government how long they intended to stay.

- Of the 191 people who answered this question, 81 percent indicated that they intend to stay for at least 5 to 10 years, with two-thirds of those indicating that they will stay for their entire careers. The remaining percentages indicated that they intend to stay between 3 and 5 years (10 percent), between 1 and 3 years (7 percent), and 1 year or less (2 percent).

These data indicate that the majority of respondents who are currently employed with the Federal Government intend to stay for a considerable amount of time.

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<sup>1</sup> The remaining list of respondents' current or most recent federal employment can be found later in the paper.

## Open-ended responses

We also asked Scholars and Fellows for any additional input or information they would like to provide on their experience with the Boren program. The survey captured 211 open-ended responses from participants. Many respondents expressed gratitude for the Boren funding and felt the program had a significant influence on their careers. Others expressed frustration over their struggles to find employment at the conclusion of the program and felt that more could be done by the NSEP office in terms of educating employers about the program and special hiring authorities, as well as helping awardees find employment. Overall, the majority of comments were positive and give valuable insights into the experiences of Boren Scholars and Fellows.

## Recommendations

Although it is evident from our interviews with stakeholders, employers, alumni, and survey respondents that the NSEP office has significantly increased the support provided to Boren Scholars and Fellows in recent years, as well as their outreach and education about the Boren program, it is vital that NSEP continue to focus on these efforts. We recommend the following:

- NSEP should continue its outreach efforts and focus on educating employers about the Boren program and the special hiring authorities afforded to Boren graduates. Due to staff turnover at federal agencies and in human resource departments, it is critical that NSEP continually reach out to federal agencies to educate them on the Boren program, award recipients' special hiring authorities, and how to use them.
- NSEP should continue to focus on hosting career fairs, providing networking opportunities, and assisting Boren awardees in finding employment, particularly in the Federal Government. If a goal of the Boren program is for Scholars and Fellows to have long-term careers in the Federal Government, emphasis should be placed on helping awardees secure Federal Government positions to begin their careers. The results of the survey seem to indicate that those who begin their careers in the Federal Government tend to stay in the Federal Government.
- NSEP should pay close attention to how many employees it has dedicated to career fairs, outreach efforts to employers, and job search assistance for Boren awardees to determine if additional resources are necessary.

- NSEP should contact all Boren alumni through newsletters and through partnership with the Boren Forum to maintain a vibrant network of program alumni and to broaden networking opportunities for all awardees, not just for recent graduates.

Because of the recent civilian hiring freezes and sequestration [3], NSEP will need to continue to be vigilant about helping Boren Scholars and Fellows secure Federal Government employment. The majority of the survey respondents (Scholars and Fellows who had completed their service requirement as of January 2014) were not conducting job searches to fulfill their service requirement during the recent hiring freeze; however, if an increasing number of Scholars and Fellows have significant difficulty finding federal employment in a constrained budget environment, it could be detrimental to the goals of the Boren program. NSEP reports that Boren Scholars and Fellows continue to be successfully hired by the Federal Government, likely due to their unique skills sets and qualifications.

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# Introduction

## Background

The Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) within the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness administers Boren Scholarships and Fellowships for students to study abroad to improve their cultural and language skills in areas critical to national security. Undergraduate students receive Boren Scholarships, and graduate students receive Boren Fellowships. In exchange for financial assistance, students must work for the Federal Government for one year after completing the program. This is called the service requirement.

The National Security Education Program (NSEP) Service Requirement provision of the David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991 [4] is unique among federal service requirement provisions. The service requirement stipulates that award recipients seek federal, national-security-related positions in return for funding to study critical languages overseas. Because the service requirement has changed, per legislation, several times since the beginning of the program, award recipients from different years have had different requirements.

According to the NSEP 2013 Annual Report [5], the original service requirement was broadly defined and excluded Boren Scholars. Boren Fellows were permitted to fulfill the requirement either by working in the Federal Government or in education in a field related to their NSEP-funded study. The law was modified in 1996 to require all award recipients to seek employment with an agency or office of the Federal Government involved with national security affairs. Award recipients who were not successful in securing federal employment were permitted to fulfill the requirement by working in higher education in an area related to their NSEP-funded study. Boren Scholars had eight years from the end of the NSEP-funded program to fulfill the service requirement, and Boren Fellows had five years from the time they finished their degree programs to begin fulfilling the service requirement.

In 2004, Congress modified the NSEP service requirement to state that award recipients must seek to obtain “work in a position in the Department of Defense or other element of the Intelligence Community that is certified by the Secretary (of Defense) as appropriate to utilize the unique language and region expertise acquired by the recipient.”

In 2007, the NSEP Service Requirement was modified to make the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, State, and any element of the Intelligence Community priority organizations in which to fulfill service. At the same time, the law stated that, “if no suitable position is available in the Department of Defense, any element of the Intelligence Community, the Department of Homeland Security, or Department of State, award recipients may satisfy the service requirement by serving in any federal agency or office in a position with national security responsibilities.”

The NSEP Service Requirement was again amended in 2008. Award recipients from 2008 to the present are required to first search for positions in four “priority” areas of government: Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of State, or any element of the Intelligence Community. If they are unable to secure work in one of the priority areas, they can search anywhere in the Federal Government for positions with national security responsibilities. As a final option, award recipients may fulfill their service in education. Work in education is only approved after an award recipient has made a demonstrated good faith effort to first find positions within the four priority areas of government, and then in any security-related federal position.

According to the legislation, finding employment to fulfill the service requirement is the responsibility of the Scholar or Fellow. To assist in this process, however, NSEP works with federal agencies to educate them on the Boren Awards and inform agencies of special hiring authorities that can be used for Boren awardees. Note that NSEP’s outreach efforts to federal agencies and increased support to awardees in finding positions is a relatively recent effort, beginning around 2008.

In that time, NSEP has engaged stakeholders to increase the placement of its award recipients into federal positions, creating specific career pathways. NSEP’s major partners include federal agencies, U.S. institutions of higher education, and private industry. In 2010, NSEP began organizing and implementing onsite, exclusive federal and private industry hiring events. These events have directly facilitated the hiring of NSEP award recipients at such federal departments and agencies as the Central Intelligence Agency, Department of State, Office of Naval Intelligence, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Geospatial Agency, and the National Security Agency.

In addition, NSEP hosts an interagency career fair each September, during which NSEP awardees are given the opportunity to liaise, provide résumés, and interview with federal hiring officials. Roughly 15 agencies from across the Federal Government have participated in the NSEP career fair since 2010. Annual attendees include the Departments of Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security, and State; various Intelligence Community components; the U.S. Agency for International Development; and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

In 2013, NSEP, in partnership with the Defense Intelligence Agency, launched an internship program exclusively for NSEP award recipients. Similarly, NSEP worked

with the State Department to certify Boren Fellows as eligible for the Diplomacy Fellows Program (DFP). Through DFP, NSEP awardees may bypass the written examination portion of the Foreign Service Exam, proceeding directly to the oral assessment.

In addition, NSEP staff members now work directly with NSEP award recipients who seek assistance on their job searches. They offer job consultations, provide résumé and cover letter assistance, lead webinars on the NSEP service requirement, and give award recipients information about the logistics of fulfilling the service requirement.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Boren program by identifying where alumni currently work and how their careers have been influenced by the Boren program. CNA developed and fielded a survey to Boren alumni who have completed their service requirements and then analyzed the data collected. The survey was retrospective and collected information on the Boren Scholars and Fellows at one point in time. We do not have a comparison group and, therefore, will not be making any causal inference from our results.

## Approach

An outline of our approach to developing and administering the survey follows:

- Boren stakeholder, employer, and alumni interviews
- Survey development
- Survey implementation
- Data analysis

## Boren program interviews

To inform the development of the survey and to understand the complexities of the Boren program, we interviewed stakeholders, employers of Boren Scholars and Fellows, and Boren alumni to gather their perspectives. We also submitted questions to the founder of the program, Senator David Boren, to understand his perspective on the program and how it has evolved over the years.

### *Stakeholder interviews*

Senator Boren indicated that the original intent of the program was to ensure that the United States has the human talent necessary to provide leadership and fully participate in the new global environment. He noted that American students studying

abroad were concentrated in just a few countries; he saw the need to encourage students to study in the rest of the world and to learn the languages and cultures of these other nations. The goal was to provide government agencies and educational institutions with a talented cadre of employees with the needed international skills. Senator Boren indicated that success of the program will be measured ultimately by the increased number of qualified personnel serving in key government agencies and serving as professors and scholars in educational institutions.

We interviewed several other key stakeholders on their perspectives on the Boren program. We reached out to those who had experience with the program and could give us insights into its effectiveness as it is currently structured. We used these interviews to drive the survey development. We interviewed the following:

- Dr. Robert Slater (former NSEP Director)
- Dr. Sam Kleinman (former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness)
- Dr. David Chu (former Under Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense (DOD))
- Ms. Gail McGinn, (former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, DOD)
- Dr. Richard Brecht (Center for Advanced Study of Language)
- Dr. Dan Davidson (American Councils for International Education)
- Dr. Todd Stewart (former NSEP Board Member)
- Mr. Glenn Nordin (DOD Foreign Language and Area Advisor)

We also received input from the NSEP Board Members as we began the project. Here we summarize some of the important points made by the stakeholders.

*Supply and demand not matched properly.* Many of the stakeholders noted concerns with the way the Boren program is structured in terms of supplying Scholars and Fellows without knowing the true demand for their skills. Several stakeholders noted their concern about Boren awardees finding positions that match their skill sets. Further, some stakeholders suggested that many federal agencies still don't value significant language capabilities and are instead looking for someone who is broadly knowledgeable. There was also concern that the government is not writing the job descriptions that express the demand for the specialized skills that Boren graduates possess. In addition, several stakeholders suggested that NSEP might want to consider a demand-driven program and think about how that would change the program.



*Concerns about the intent of the program and too narrow a focus on Federal Government.* Some stakeholders expressed concern that the focus on graduates finding positions in the Federal Government and in DOD, the Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, and the intelligence agencies specifically is too narrow and that there are many ways for the Boren program to contribute to national security. This includes contributing from outside government (such as government contractors or universities). Stakeholders mentioned the importance of capturing the wide range of what people are doing and not just those who work in the Federal Government.

*Concerns about hiring and awardees finding the right position.* Some stakeholders noted concerns about the difficulty of Boren graduates joining the Federal Government, especially in the early years of the program and in recent years due to federal civilian hiring freezes. Many noted that it needs to be easier for graduates to get a Federal Government position in the first place and that some sort of placement mechanism may be required.

### *Employer interviews*

We also interviewed several employers who have hired Boren awardees to get their perspectives. The employers we spoke to noted that Boren graduates are smart, well-trained, and have critical language skills and cultural experience. Several employers noted that they try to hire Boren graduates whenever possible because they are such ideal hires.

Some employers, however, expressed frustration over not being able to retain Boren graduates once a temporary position is converted to a permanent position and must be competed. They noted that, at that point, someone with more experience is likely to get the job. Others commented that Boren graduates typically move on if they feel there is no career path for them because of more senior employees in upper level positions. We note, however, that with the National Defense Authorization Acts (NDAA) for FY 2010 and FY 2013 NSEP awardees can now be noncompetitively converted to career-conditional status following two years of successful employment within their federal organizations.

Although NDAA FY 2010 and FY 2013 have been pivotal for NSEP and for employers hiring Boren recipients in recent years, some employers we spoke with expressed frustration over the lack of knowledge about the special hiring authorities afforded to Boren graduates within their agencies. They noted that it would be easier to hire Boren graduates if the special hiring authorities were understood by everyone involved in the hiring process.

Several employers also suggested the possibility of structuring the Boren program more like the Presidential Management Fellowship and setting aside positions for Boren graduates to guarantee placement at critical agencies.

### *Alumni interviews*

Finally, we held a meeting and conducted individual interviews with Boren alumni to get their perspectives on the program and inquire about questions they would like to see on the survey. We interviewed both Scholars and Fellows from a wide range of years in the program to ensure a wide range of perspectives.

## Survey development

Next, in consultation with staff and leadership at DLNSEO and using the knowledge of the Boren program gained throughout our interviews, CNA developed an online survey consisting of questions for Boren alumni who had completed their service requirements. The core set of questions presented to all survey respondents focused on post-Boren education and employment and the influence of the Boren Award on the career paths of Scholars and Fellows.

In October 2013, CNA pretested the draft survey with a group of nine Boren alumni who had completed their service requirements. The group included Scholars and Fellows from various years of the program, with varying career lengths. Participants completed the survey online and provided feedback both via email and over the phone. This pretest was conducted to ensure that the alumni understood the survey language and the questions that were being asked. We incorporated their feedback into the final version of the survey.

Once the survey draft and protocol were completed and vetted, we submitted them for OMB approval, which was required to administer the survey. In December 2013, we obtained approval (OMB Control Number 0704-0505) to administer the survey.

## Survey implementation

CNA worked closely with the staff at DLNSEO to identify Boren alumni who had completed their service requirements and to obtain the most up-to-date email information for this group. First CNA used the DLNSEO-provided database, Rosebud, which contains contact information for Boren Scholars and Fellows at the time of award. Next, CNA reached out to the Boren Forum to obtain the contact information of its membership. The Boren Forum is an alumni group organized by and for award recipients of the National Security Education Program.<sup>2</sup> Because the Boren Forum is

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<sup>2</sup> The mission is to promote the educational, social, and career development of NSEP award recipients and to enhance and expand public service opportunities through mutually beneficial partnerships among alumni and other organizations.

an active alumni organization, we expected that its contact information would be more recent than email addresses provided at the time the Scholar or Fellow received the award.

CNA then used first and last names to match the Boren Forum information with the Rosebud information and found 712 matches between the two sets of data. Of those matches, 254 led to an email address from Boren Forum that was not the same as the email in Rosebud. CNA then updated the Rosebud email information with the Boren Forum information for those individuals to ensure that the survey went to the most recent email address available.

We launched the survey in January 2014. Because we were concerned that an email from CNA might be regarded as spam by some of the alumni, DLNSEO sent all initial and follow-up emails to alumni, requesting survey participation. In an effort to reach as many people as possible, in case the NSEP email address was blocked by an organization, CNA also sent an email to the addresses of the recipients who had “bounced back” to NSEP as undeliverable. Subsequent reminder emails were sent each week, staggered over a two-month period. The two final reminder emails provided the current response rate to the alumni and requested their assistance to help bolster the response rate.

The period for survey fielding was from January 2014 to March 2014. After the survey closed, the data were downloaded from the survey software, and all email information was stripped from the data. CNA then saved and analyzed these data on a secure server within CNA’s accredited secure system.

## Major components of the survey

Screenshots of the survey are in Appendix A. Because of branches in the survey logic, it was not possible to include every possible outcome in the post-Boren education and employment section in the appendix. Here, we broadly describe the major survey components and the types of information we intended to glean from them.

### *Demographics*

The first section of the survey asks respondents demographic questions, such as Scholar versus Fellow, year of award, language studied, country where studies took place, and length of award. The intent of these questions was to be able to group respondents by these characteristics, without having to use personally identifiable information, and link groups of respondents back to the database.

### *Applying for a Boren Scholarship or Fellowship*

We then ask respondents about the process of applying for a Boren Scholarship or Fellowship. The intent of these questions was to gather respondent's perspectives on the application process and why they were interested in the Boren program.

### *Post-Boren education and employment*

In this section, we ask respondents about their post-Boren Award education and employment to gain an understanding of the education and career paths of alumni after graduation. Respondents could provide information on up to six post-Boren positions, including their current or most recent positions. If a respondent selected a U.S. Federal Government position or federal contractor position, he or she was asked details about this position, including General Schedule (GS) or GS equivalent levels, the nature of the position, why he or she left the position (if applicable), or how long he or she intended to stay in the Federal Government if that was the current employment.

### *Service requirement position*

This section asks specific questions about the positions respondents used to fulfill their service requirements. The intent of this section was to understand how Boren alumni viewed their service requirement positions and their perspectives on how the skills they gained through the Boren program affected these positions.

### *Current employment*

This section asks respondents questions about their current employment. Only respondents who indicated that they had current positions different from the positions used to fulfill their service requirements were asked to complete these questions. The intent of this section was to try to gain an understanding of where alumni are currently employed and how they might be using the skills acquired during the Boren program in their current positions.

### *Career path*

In this section, we ask about the impact of the Boren Award on the recipient's career path. We ask about the impact of the skills and perspectives gained as a Boren awardee, such as language and regional proficiency, on the recipient's career path. We also ask about the impact of the resources gained as a Boren awardee, such as networking opportunities, special hiring authorities, and Boren Award name recognition.

*Open-ended question*

Finally, we asked Scholars and Fellows for any additional input or information they would like to provide on their experience with the Boren program in an open-ended format.

## Overview of Response Rates

In this section, we present overall survey response rates, as well as response rates for important subgroups of respondents. We then discuss the implications of this assessment for interpreting the survey's results.

### Defining the survey population

Of the 2,012 alumni who were surveyed, we received 551 completed survey responses for an overall response rate of 27 percent. Table 1 represents the response rates for subgroups of the population:

- Year of award
  - 1994 through 2004
  - 2005 through 2012
- Scholars and Fellows
- Scholars and Fellows by year group

Table 1. Response rates

	Number of alumni	Responses	Response rate (percentage)
1994-2004	1,520	327	22
2005-2012	492	224	46
Scholars	1,087	407	37
Fellows	925	144	16
Scholars (1994–2004)	830	257	31
Scholars (2005–2012)	257	150	58
Fellows (1994–2004)	685	64	9
Fellows (2005–2012)	240	80	33

We chose these subgroups because we anticipated that responses might vary for these populations. We believe that the time period of the award is critical because the program has evolved significantly over the years, with DLNSEO providing more assistance for job seekers in recent years. We chose 2005 as a cutoff because it is close to the midpoint of the program and also because of programmatic changes that year. In 2005, the service requirement provision was set to one year for all Scholars and Fellows. We also separate response rates for Scholars and Fellows because we believed that these groups might have different opinions of the program.

As anticipated, response rates for graduates from the more recent years of the program were higher than for those from the earlier years. This could be the result of better contact information for the more recent graduates and also could be related to more recent graduates feeling more connected to the program and more compelled to respond. Scholars in the 2005–2012 period had the highest response rate—58 percent.

## **Using the results of this survey**

Regarding self-selection and other types of biases, we offer a few considerations. There is a potential for bias in the survey responses because those who chose to respond may have had a more positive or negative experience with the program. In addition, as mentioned earlier, we were more likely to reach more recent graduates or someone involved with the Boren Forum because their contact information was likely to be more accurate.

Note that, although all questions on the survey were voluntary and we indicated that all responses would be anonymous, those who are employed in the intelligence community might not have felt comfortable about responding.

We also caution that because data were not available for a comparison group, we cannot make causal inferences about the program.

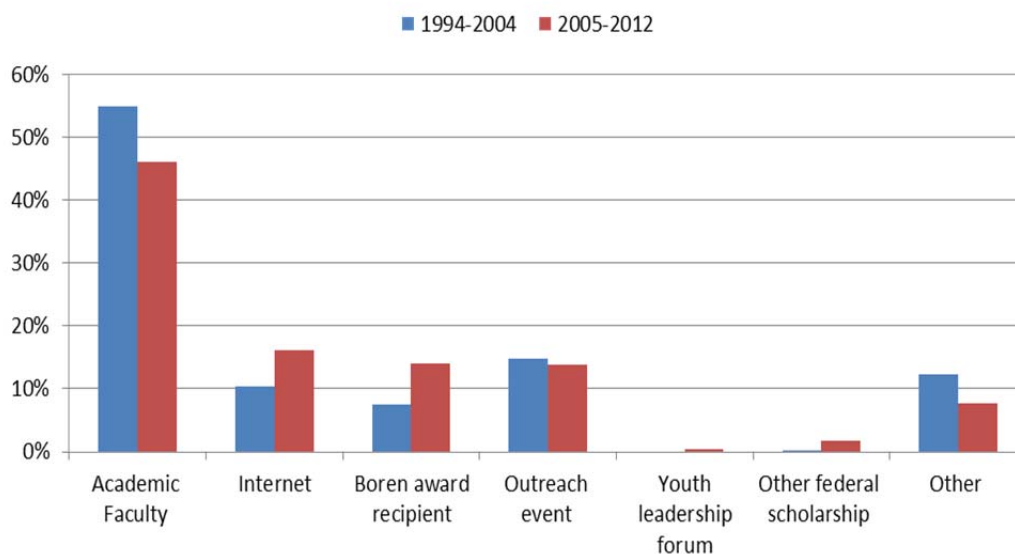
## Results

In this section, we present the results of our analysis of survey responses. We look at responses by the year groups in which the recipients received Boren Awards. As with response rates, we use the 1994–2004 and 2005–2012 year groups to separate earlier and more recent years of the program and to examine changes in perspectives over time. We include the comparison of Scholar and Fellow responses in Appendix B.

### Introduction to the Boren program

We asked Scholars and Fellows how they learned about the Boren program (Figure 1). Respondents were asked to check all options that apply.

Figure 1. How Scholars and Fellows learned about the Boren program



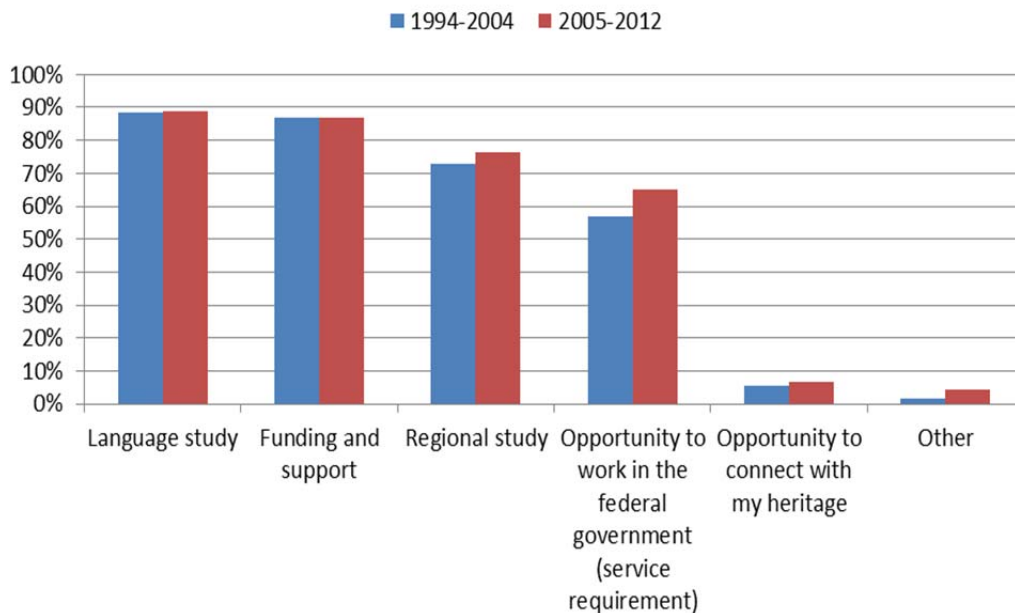
When asked how the awardees learned about the Boren program, we found that the largest percentage of respondents in both year groups learned about the program through academic faculty. We also found that a slightly higher percentage of



respondents in the more recent year group learned about the Boren program through the internet or another Boren Award recipient.

We then asked respondents what initially attracted them to the Boren program (Figure 2). Respondents were asked to check all options that apply.

Figure 2. What attracted the Scholar or Fellow to the Boren program?

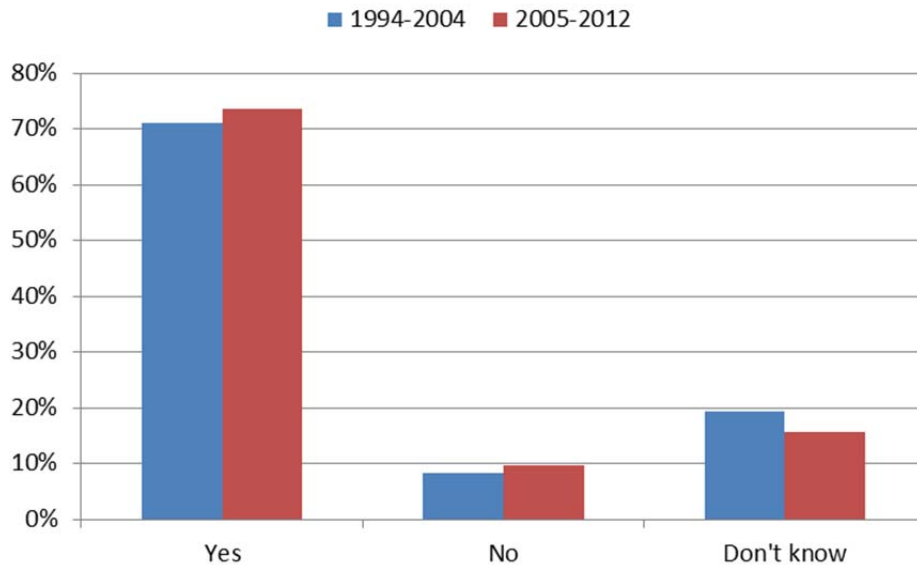


We found that close to 90 percent of respondents in both year groups were attracted to the Boren program for the language study, followed by funding and support, and then regional study. The opportunity to work in the Federal Government (the service requirement position) was given as the fourth most popular response, with a higher percentage of respondents in the more recent year group selecting this reason. This could suggest that more recent graduates are more interested in Federal Government employment than are earlier graduates of the program. This makes sense, given the shift in the program's focus on fulfilling the service requirement through Federal Government positions in more recent years, compared with the early years where the service requirement could be fulfilled in Federal Government positions or positions in higher education.

Next, we asked respondents if they would have still considered working in the Federal Government if they hadn't been exposed to the Boren program (Figure 3). The intent of this question was to determine if those who apply for a Boren Award are

already interested in working for the Federal Government or if participating in the program later sparks that interest.

Figure 3. If you hadn't been exposed to the Boren program, would you still have considered working in the Federal Government?

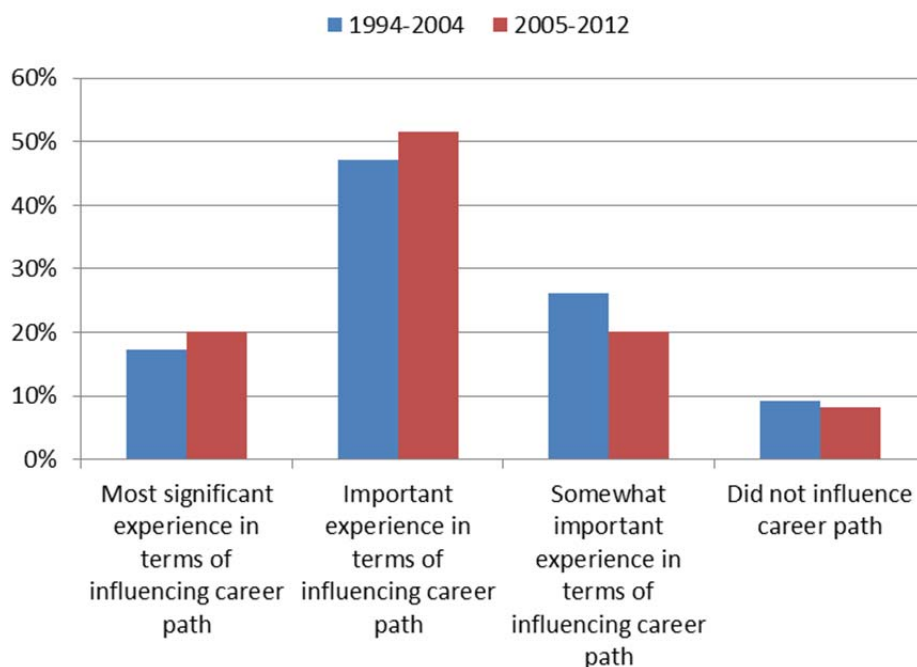


We found that over 70 percent of respondents in both year groups would have still considered working in the Federal Government without exposure to the Boren program. This suggests that those who apply for a Boren Scholarship or Fellowship have an interest in Federal Government employment before applying for the program.

In addition, we asked Boren Scholars and Fellows to evaluate their experience in the Boren program in terms of how it influenced their career paths (Figure 4).

Here, we see that the largest percentage of Scholars and Fellows in both year groups found their experience as a Boren awardee to be an important influence on their career paths. We also found slightly higher percentages in the more recent year group, indicating that (compared with the earlier year group) it was the most significant experience or an important experience in terms of influencing their career paths.

Figure 4. Looking back at your education, how would you evaluate your experience as a Boren Scholar or Fellow in terms of influencing your career path?



## Other scholarships, fellowships, and awards

DLNSEO was also interested in what other types of scholarships, fellowships, or awards the Scholars and Fellows received in addition to the Boren Award. Table 2 presents the results of this question by year group. Respondents were asked to select all scholarships, fellowships, and awards they received in addition to Boren. Here, we highlight some of the awards won by large numbers of Scholars and Fellows: 57 Scholars and Fellows from 1994 through 2004 and 28 Scholars and Fellows from 2005 through 2012 were recipients of a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Award, while 45 Scholars and Fellows from 1994 through 2004 and 21 Scholars and Fellows from 2005 through 2012 received Fulbright Fellowships.

Table 2. Other scholarships, fellowships, and awards

	1994–2004	2005–2012
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship	2	3
Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Fellowship	0	0
Critical Language Scholarship (CLS)	4	18
Flagship Fellowship	8	4
<b>Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Program</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>28</b>
Freeman Award	5	5
<b>Fulbright Fellowship</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>21</b>
Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship	15	2
Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GANN)	2	1
International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) Award	14	2
Jacob K. Javits Award	3	0
Mellon Fellowship	12	0
National Science Foundation Fellowship or Grant	15	5
National Security Language Initiative for Youth Award	0	0
Other	74	37
Social Science Research Council Fellowship or Grant	7	1
Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship	3	0
University departmental/division grant	122	64
I did not receive any other scholarships, fellowships, or awards	81	84

DLNSEO was particularly interested in whether Boren awardees had received an Office of Personnel Management Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF) or if they had applied for the Diplomacy Fellows Program (DFP). The PMF is a flagship leadership development program for the Federal Government at the entry level for advanced degree candidates. The DFP is designed to advance eligible candidates to the Foreign Service Oral Assessment for the competitive selection of entry-level Foreign Service Officer Candidates at the Department of State. The DFP is open only to those who have completed certain types of fellowships, and Boren Fellows are included in this elite group.

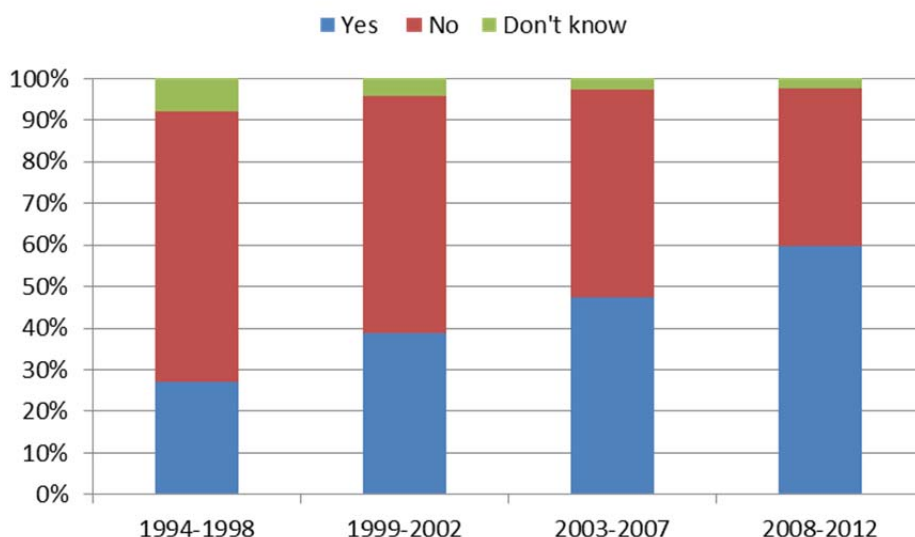
We found that 15 Scholars and Fellows from the 1994–2004 year group and 12 from the 2005–2012 year group received PMFs. Of those, 7 in the 1994–2004 year group and 8 in the 2005–2012 year group used the PMF to satisfy their Boren service requirement positions.

We also found that 29 Scholars and Fellows in the 1994–2004 year group and 42 Scholars and Fellows in the 2005–2012 year group applied for the DFP. Of those who applied, 9 from the 1994–2004 year group and 11 from the 2005–2012 year group subsequently entered the Foreign Service.

## Using the NSEP office

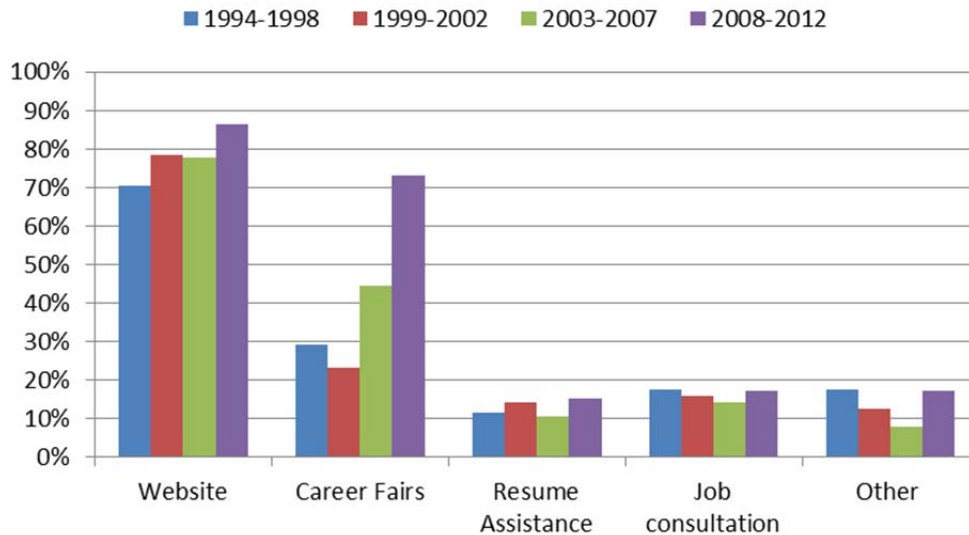
Next, we asked a series of questions about the use of the NSEP office when the Boren Scholar or Fellow was applying for positions to fulfill his or her service requirement (Figure 5). Here, we introduce finer year groups to show the gradual changes over time.

Figure 5. Did you use the NSEP office as a resource when applying for jobs?



We found that Boren Scholars and Fellows have increased their use of the NSEP office when applying for jobs from 27 percent of respondents in the 1994-1998 year group to 60 percent of respondents in the 2008-2012 year group. This is likely due, in part, to the increased involvement and support provided by the NSEP office in recent years as compared with the early years of the program. As we heard in interviews with alumni and in discussions with the staff of the NSEP office, the office has been more heavily engaged with alumni in helping them find positions in recent years as compared with earlier years of the program. In addition, the NSEP office now regularly hosts career fairs with both federal and nonfederal employers. The increased use of these career fairs can be seen in Figure 6, which shows the percentages of respondents who said they used the NSEP office as a resource.

Figure 6. How did you use the NSEP office when applying for jobs?



We found that Boren Scholars and Fellows have increased their use of NSEP-sponsored career fairs dramatically from 29 percent of respondents in the 1994-1998 year group to 72 percent of respondents in the 2008-2012 year group. This increase is likely due, in part, to NSEP sponsoring more career fairs in recent years. It's also possible that some respondents in the 2008-2012 year group made use of career fairs more heavily because of difficulty finding Federal Government positions through other methods due to the constrained budget environment in the government in recent years.

## Use of special hiring authorities

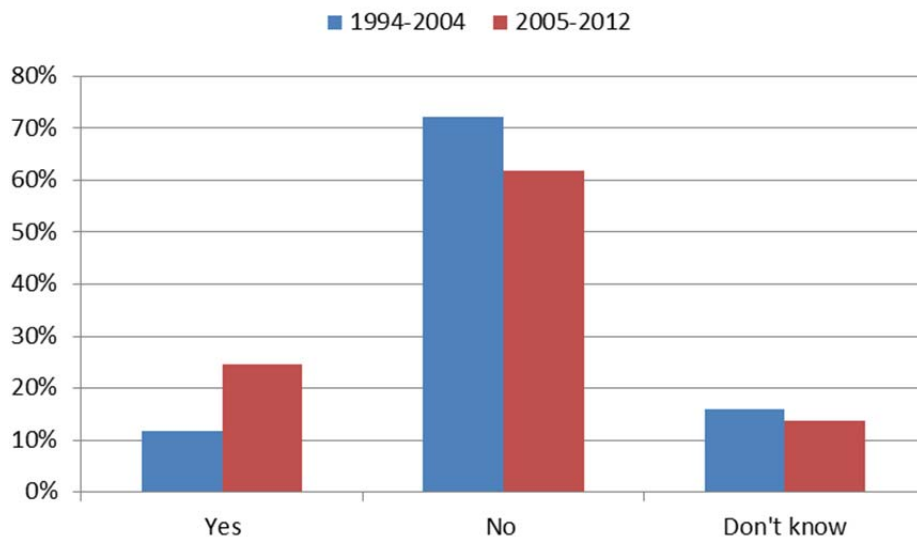
Federal organizations may make noncompetitive appointments of NSEP award recipients under the David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991. The two distinct hiring authorities are (1) Schedule A, 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 213.3102 (r) and (2) the NDAA's for FY 2010 and FY 2013.

The Schedule A hiring authorities are a group of excepted service authorities that describe special jobs and situations for which it is impractical to use standard qualification requirements and to rate applicants using traditional competitive procedures. Schedule A allows NSEP award recipients to be hired for certain federal positions without competition and for a period of up to four years. Under the NDAA for FY 2013, any federal agency with national security responsibilities may

noncompetitively appoint an NSEP awardee to the excepted service and later convert that appointee to career or career-conditional status in the competitive service.<sup>3</sup>

We asked Boren Scholars and Fellows about the use of these special hiring authorities when they were being hired for their service requirement positions (Figure 7). We found that the majority of respondents in both year groups did not use the special hiring authorities when being hired to their service requirement positions. The percentage of respondents whose agencies *did* use special hiring authorities, however, has increased from 11 percent in the 1994-2004 year group to 24 percent in the 2005-2012 year group.

Figure 7. Use of special hiring authorities



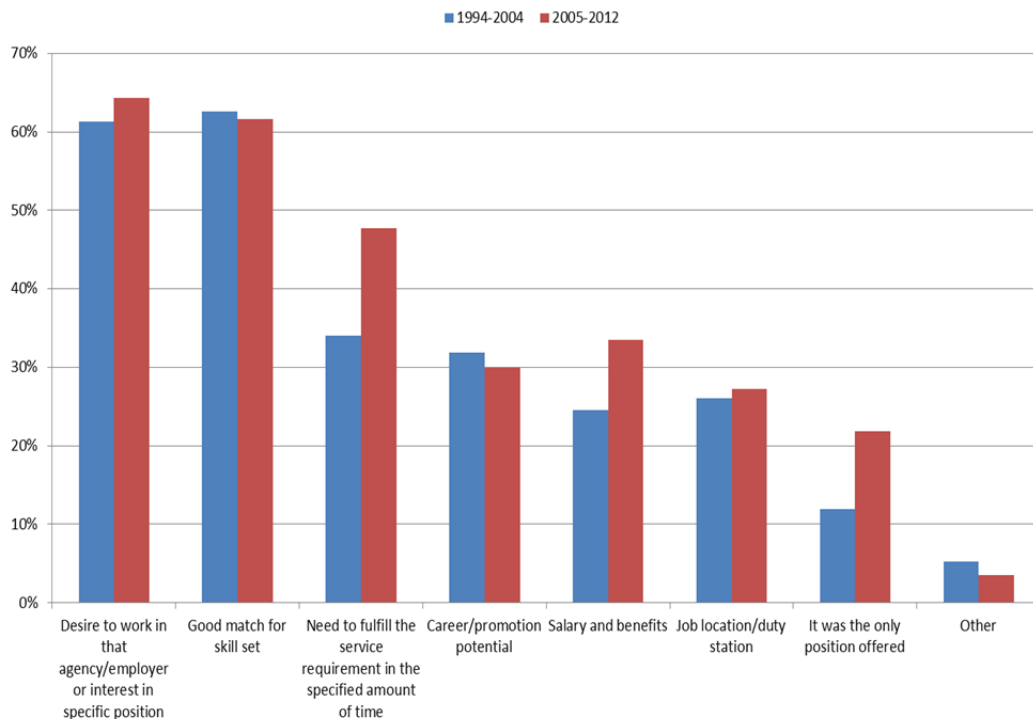
This increase is likely due, in part, to agencies and human resource departments within these agencies having increased knowledge and awareness of the special hiring authorities and how they can be used for Boren recipients. It is likely that knowledge of the special hiring authorities for Boren awardees varies by agency and by human resource department and also changes over time as personnel come and go. It should also be noted that 16 percent of respondents in the 1994-2004 year group and 14 percent of respondents in the 2005-2012 year group did not know if special hiring authorities had been used during the hiring process.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nsepnet.org/hireexemption.aspx>.

## Service requirement position

Next, we asked a series of questions about the position the respondents accepted to satisfy their service requirements. We asked why they accepted their service requirement positions (Figure 8) and how the skills gained through the Boren program had influenced receiving the positions as well as succeeding in the positions (Figures 9 and 10).

Figure 8. Reasons for accepting service requirement position



Respondents were asked to select all reasons that applied for accepting their service requirement positions. The top reason given was the desire to work in that agency (or for that employer) or interest in the specific position, followed by the position being a good match for the respondent's skill set, with over 60 percent of respondents in both year groups listing these reasons.

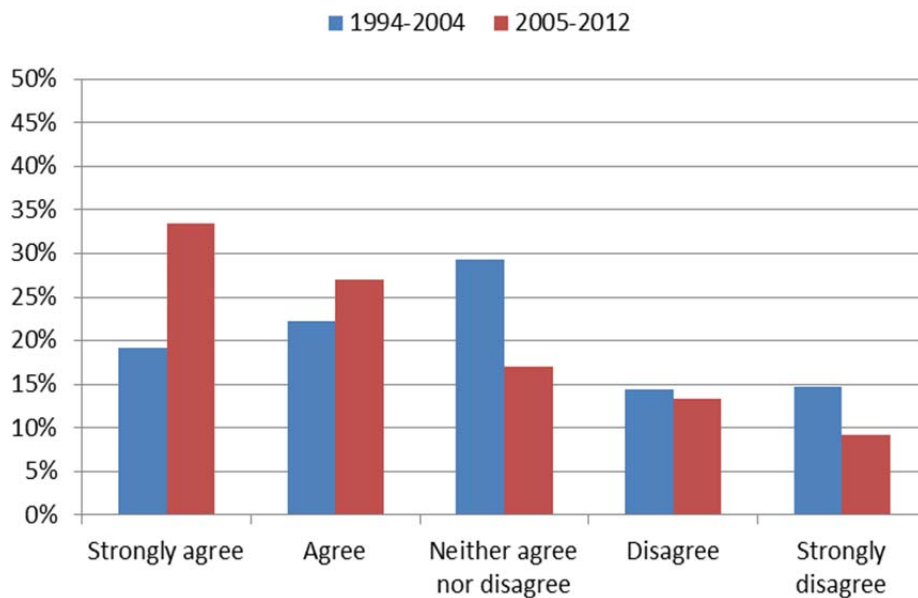
The third top reason given for accepting the service requirement position was the need to fulfill the service requirement in the specified amount of time. The percentage of respondents who indicated that this was a reason to accept the service requirement position increased from 34 percent of respondents in the 1994-2004



year group to 48 percent of respondents in the 2005–2012 year group. This is likely due, in part, to the decreased time allotted to fulfill the service requirement. In the earlier years of the program, Scholars had as many as eight years to fulfill the service requirement, while Fellows had five. That number was reduced to three years for Scholars and two years for Fellows in 2005. This could suggest that respondents feel more pressure to accept jobs because of the decreased time given to fulfill the service requirement. It is also interesting to note that the percentage who indicated that they accepted the service requirement position because it was the only job offered increased to 22 percent in the 2005–2012 year group, up from 12 percent in the 1994–2004 year group. This increase could be due to the program’s narrower focus on alumni finding Federal Government positions as well as civilian hiring freezes in recent years.

Next we asked respondents if they felt that the Boren Scholarships or Fellowships had helped them get their service requirement positions (Figure 9).

Figure 9. My Boren Scholarship/Fellowship helped me get the service requirement position

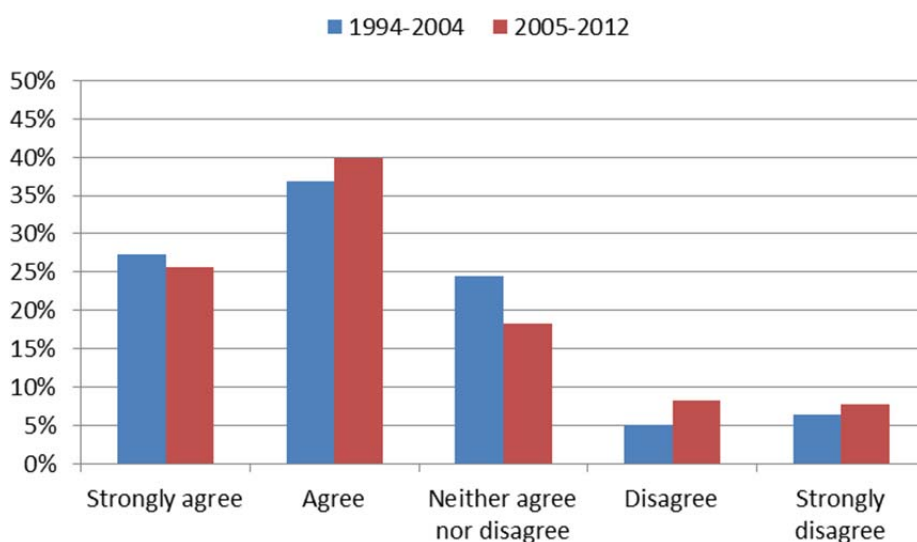


We found that 40 percent of respondents in the 1994–2004 year group strongly agree or agree that the Boren Scholarships or Fellowships helped them get their service requirement positions, while 60 percent of respondents from the 2005–2012 year group strongly agree or agree. This increase could be due, in part, to the increased

assistance provided to the Scholar or Fellow by the NSEP office to find a position to satisfy the service requirement.

We then asked respondents if they felt that the Boren Scholarships or Fellowships had helped them succeed in their service requirement positions (Figure 10). Here we found that 63 percent of respondents from the 1994–2004 group and 65 percent from the 2005–2012 year group agree or strongly agree that the Boren Award helped them succeed in their service requirement positions.

Figure 10. My Boren Scholarship/Fellowship helped me **succeed** in the service requirement position



We also asked respondents what skills gained as Boren Scholars or Fellows they used in their service requirement positions (Table 3). Respondents were asked to check all options that apply.

We found that the top five skills listed that were used in the service requirement position were (1) cross-cultural understanding, (2) regional proficiency, (3) confidence in adapting to new/unfamiliar settings, (4) language proficiency, and (5) interpersonal communication. Only 4 percent of respondents from the 1994–2004 year group and 9 percent of respondents from the 2005–2012 year group indicated that they didn’t use skills acquired during Boren in their service requirement positions, and no one indicated that they didn’t acquire skills during the Boren program.

Table 3. Skills used in service requirement position

	1994-2004 (percentage)	2005-2012 (percentage)
Cross-cultural understanding	75	67
Regional proficiency	64	63
Confidence in adapting to new/unfamiliar settings	60	60
Language proficiency	60	53
Interpersonal communication	57	47
Problem solving	45	42
Writing	44	39
Research	46	35
Professionalism	38	38
Ability to perform under pressure	36	36
Strategic planning	18	26
Monitoring progress against agreed-upon goals	16	15
Building project timetables	12	15
Didn't use skills acquired during Boren	4	9
Didn't acquire skills during Boren	0	0

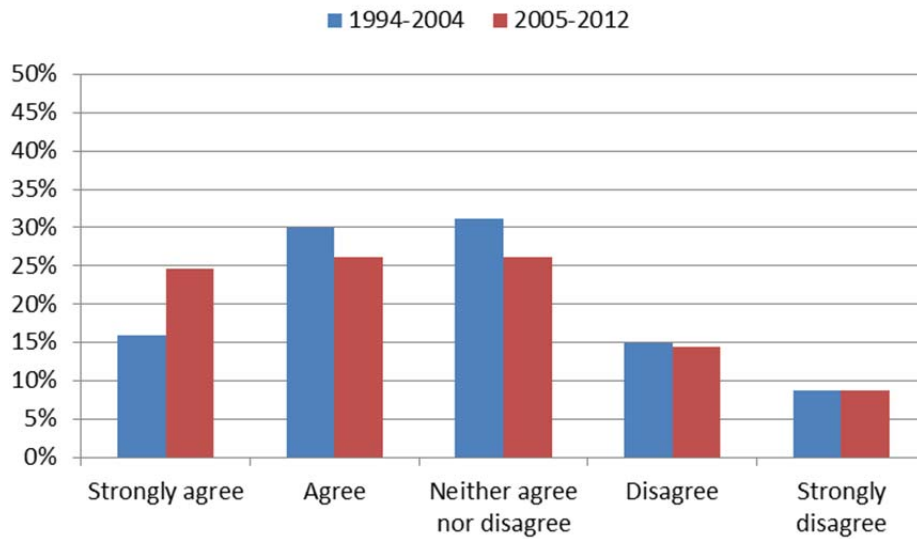
## Current or most recent position<sup>4</sup>

We then asked the same set of questions for respondents who are no longer in the positions used to satisfy their service requirements and have moved on to different positions (Figure 11). Of the 551 respondents, 343 indicated that they were no longer in the same positions used to satisfy their service requirements.

We found that 46 percent of respondents from the 1994–2004 year group and 50 percent of respondents from the 2005–2012 year group agreed or strongly agreed that the Boren Scholarships or Fellowships helped them get their current or most recent positions. For the earlier year group, 31 percent of respondents neither agree nor disagree that Boren helped them get their most recent positions, while 26 percent from the more recent year group neither agree nor disagree. This question seems to indicate that respondents feel that the Boren Award has been less influential in getting their current or most recent positions, compared with getting the service requirement positions.

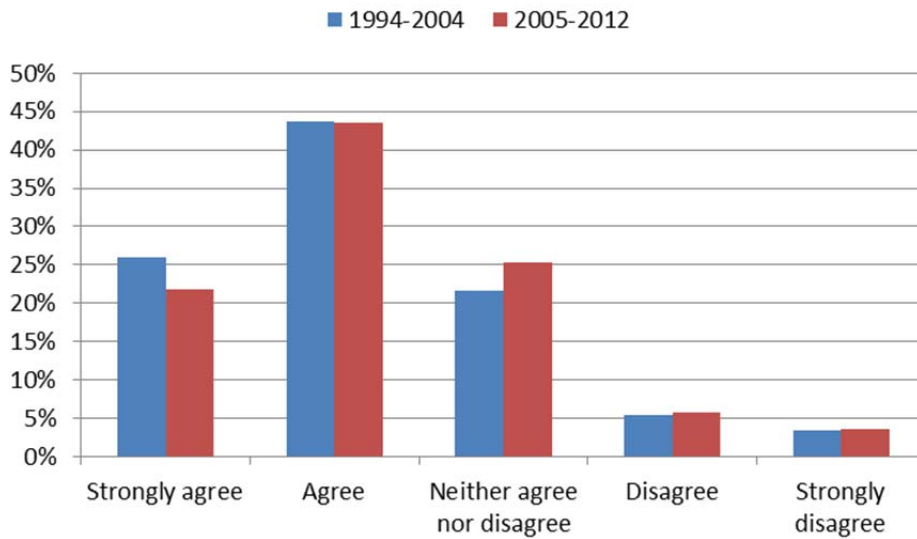
<sup>4</sup> We use “current or most recent position” because some respondents did not indicate that the last position listed was, in fact, the current position. Others indicated that they had left the last position entered but did not include any additional employment information.

Figure 11. My Boren Scholarship/Fellowship helped me **get** my current or most recent position



We then asked respondents if they felt that the Boren Scholarships or Fellowships had helped them succeed in their current or most recent positions (Figure 12).

Figure 12. My Boren Scholarship/Fellowship helped me **succeed** in my current or most recent position



When asked if respondents felt that the Boren Award had helped them succeed in their current or most recent positions, we found that 70 percent of respondents from the 1994–2004 year group and 65 percent of respondents from the 2005–2012 year group agree or strongly agree that the Boren Scholarships or Fellowships helped them succeed in these positions. This is an important finding because it indicates that the vast majority of these Boren awardees find significant value in their Boren Awards in the positions they currently hold.

We also asked respondents what skills gained as Boren Scholars or Fellows they used in their current or most recent positions and found the top five skills to be the same as those given in the question on skills used in the service requirement position.

## **Influence of skills and perspectives and resources gained on career path**

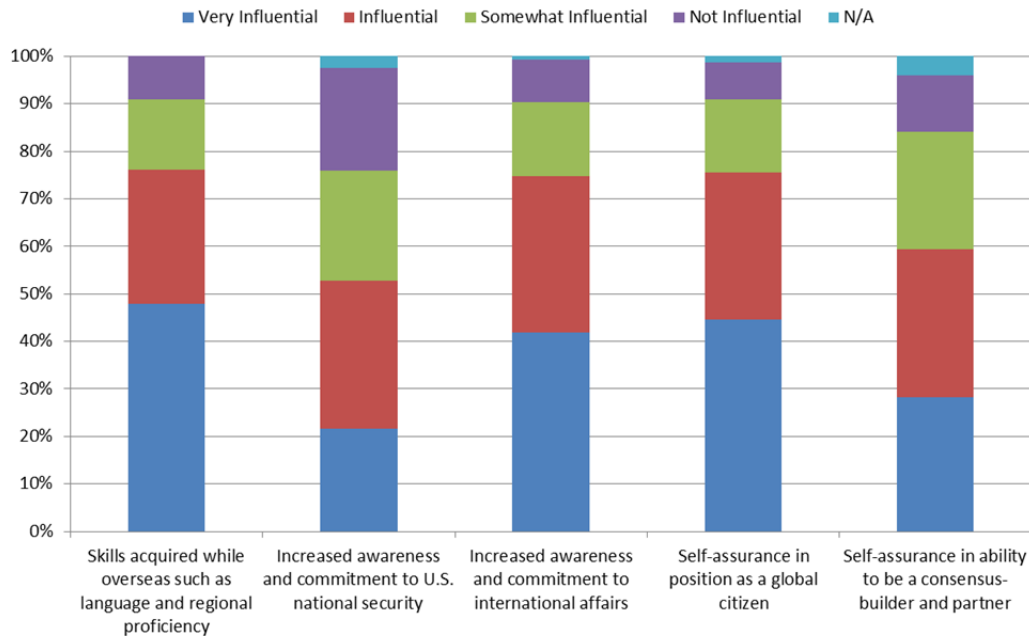
In this subsection, we present the results of questions asking about the influence of both the skills and perspectives gained as well as the resources gained as a Boren Scholar or Fellow on the recipient's career path. For these questions, we present the overall results rather than results by year group since we found little change in perspectives over time.

We asked respondents to rate how influential they found the following skills and perspectives gained as a Boren Scholar or Fellow (Figure 13) to be:

- Skills acquired while overseas, such as language and regional proficiency
- Increased awareness and commitment to U.S. national security
- Increased awareness and commitment to international affairs
- Self-assurance in position as a global citizen
- Self-assurance in ability to be a consensus builder and partner

We found that the majority of respondents found each of these skills and perspectives to be influential or very influential on their career paths (Figure 13). For example, 76 percent of respondents found the skills acquired overseas, such as language and regional proficiency, to be influential or very influential on their career paths. Fifty-two percent of respondents found the increased awareness and commitment to U.S. national security to be influential or very influential, 75 percent found the increased awareness and commitment to international affairs to be influential or very influential, 76 percent found the self-assurance in position as a global citizen to be influential, and 59 percent found the self-assurance to be a consensus builder and partner influential or very influential in their career paths.

Figure 13. Influence of **skills and perspectives** gained as a Boren Scholar or Fellow on career path

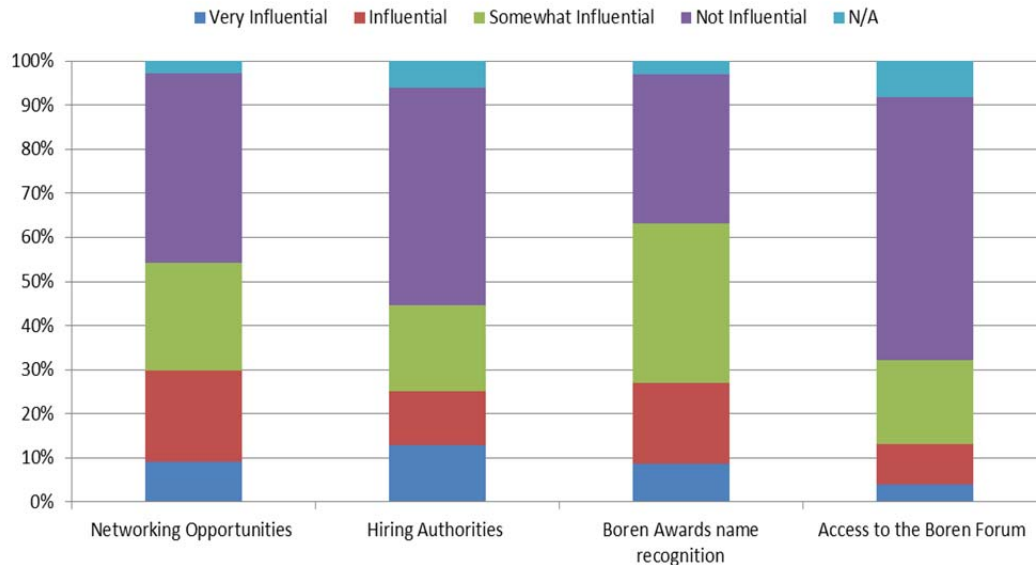


Next, we asked respondents how influential they felt that the resources gained as Boren Scholars or Fellows were on their career paths (Figure 14). These resources included:

- Networking opportunities
- Special hiring authorities (Schedule A and NDAA's 2010 and 2013)
- Boren Award name recognition
- Access to the Boren Forum (the alumni organization for Boren Scholars and Fellows)

Here, in contrast to the skills and perspectives, we found that the majority of respondents found the resources gained as Boren Scholars or Fellows to be only somewhat influential or not influential on their career paths.

Figure 14. Influence of **resources** gained as a Boren Scholar or Fellow on career path



## Special hiring authorities

Regarding Boren Scholars' and Fellows' special hiring authorities (Schedule A and NDAAs of 2010 and 2013), we found that:

- As noted earlier, the percentage of respondents who utilized the special hiring authorities when securing their service requirement position increased from 11 percent in the 1994-2004 year group to 24 percent in the 2005-2012 year group.
- Twenty-five percent of respondents found the special hiring authorities to be very influential or influential, while 69 percent found the special hiring authorities to be only somewhat influential or not influential on their career path.

Note that many respondents to this survey would not have had access to the pivotal hiring authorities introduced in the NDAAs of 2010 and 2013. In addition, some respondents may not have been aware of the special hiring authorities that were available to them or if they were utilized at the time they were seeking employment or on-boarding into their federal position.

Further, as supported in the survey's open-ended question responses, while some respondents attempted to use the special hiring authorities when seeking employment, they found various impediments. For example, many found employers to have a lack of knowledge about how to utilize the special hiring authorities, or they found employers to be unable to hire during the civilian hiring freeze, which has been in place across the Federal Government in recent years.

## Other resources

We also asked respondents how much they felt that Boren Award name recognition, networking opportunities, and access to the Boren Forum (the alumni organization for Scholars and Fellows) influenced their career paths. We found that respondents did not find the resources gained as a Boren to be as influential as the skills and perspectives gained:

- Seventy percent found Boren Award name recognition to be only somewhat influential or not influential on their career path.
- Sixty-seven percent found the networking opportunities gained a result of the Boren program to be only somewhat influential or not influential on their career path.
- Seventy-eight percent found access to the Boren Forum to be only somewhat influential or not influential on their career path.

We also examined responses to this question by year group to determine if there were changes in perspective over time, but we found little change. This seems to indicate that, although the NSEP office has greatly improved the resources provided to Boren Scholars and Fellows over the years and has worked to educate employers on the Boren program and the special hiring authorities afforded to Boren awardees, even more work could be done in this area to improve the visibility of the Boren program.

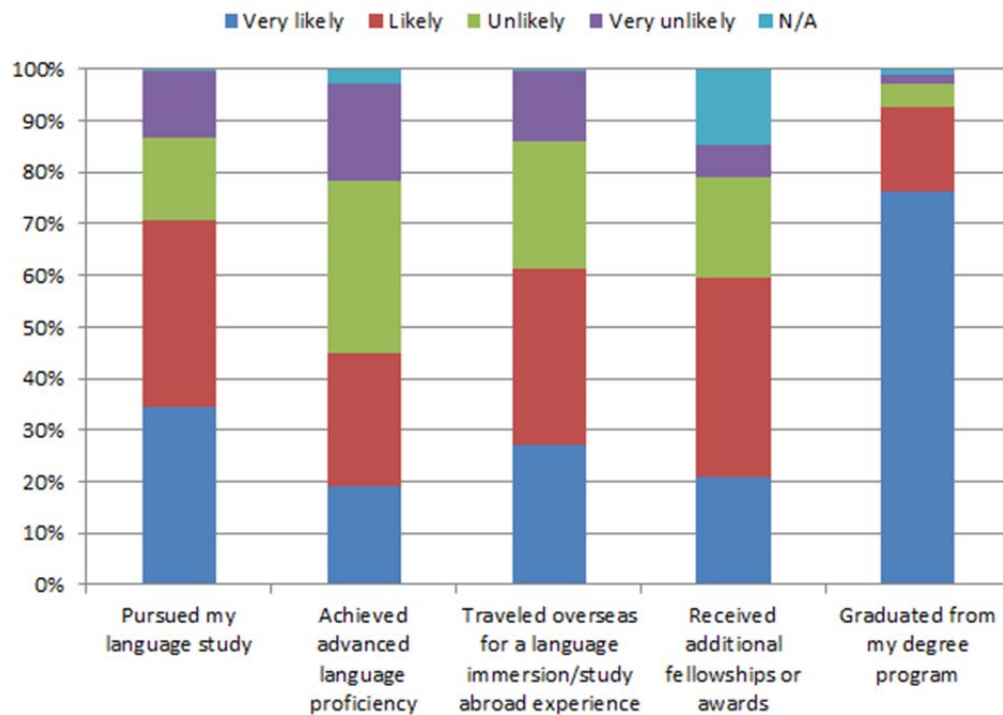
Regarding Boren name recognition, open-ended comments on the survey suggest that it is improving and depends on the federal agency. However, other comments suggest that Boren name recognition is not on a par with the Office of Management and Budget's Presidential Management Fellowship or the Department of State's Fulbright program. Better branding should make the use of Boren Scholars' and Fellows' hiring authorities more effective.



## Academic and career outcomes without the support of the Boren Award

We next asked a series of questions about career and academic outcomes and whether the respondents felt that they would have achieved those outcomes without the support of the Boren Scholarships or Fellowships (Figure 15).

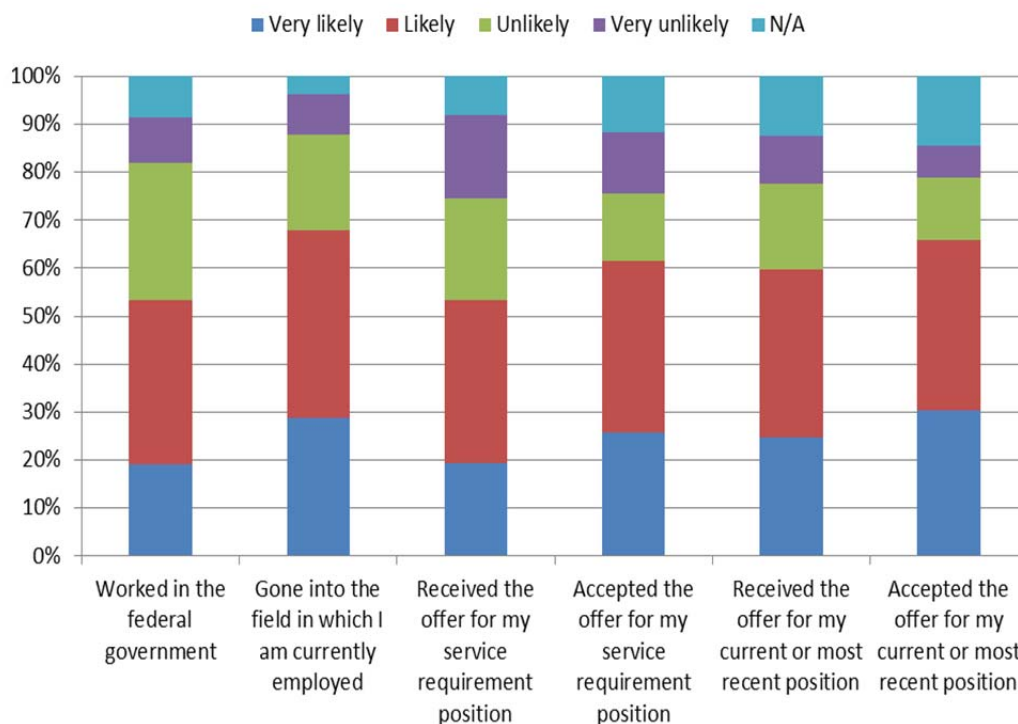
Figure 15. Likelihood of academic outcomes without the support of the Boren Scholarship/Fellowship



We found that the majority of respondents felt that it was likely or very likely that they still would have (a) pursued their language study (70 percent), (b) traveled overseas for a language immersion or study abroad experience (61 percent), (c) received additional scholarships, fellowships, or awards (59 percent), and (d) graduated from their degree program (92 percent) without the support of the Boren Scholarships or Fellowships. Fifty-three percent of respondents, however, indicated it was unlikely or very unlikely that they would have achieved advanced language proficiency without the Boren Awards.

Next, we asked if certain career outcomes of respondents would still have been likely without the support of the Boren Awards (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Likelihood of career outcomes without the support of the Boren Scholarship/Fellowship



We found that 53 percent of respondents indicated that it was likely or very likely they still would have worked in the Federal Government without the support of the Boren Award, while 38 percent of respondents indicated that this was unlikely or very unlikely. Sixty-eight percent of respondents indicated that it was likely or very likely they still would have gone into the field in which they are currently employed. A little over half of respondents (53 percent) answered that they still would have received the offer for their service requirement positions, and 39 percent indicated that this would have been unlikely or very unlikely without the support of the Boren Scholarships/Fellowships.

## Post-Boren Award employment

A section of the survey was dedicated to determining the employment history of Boren Scholars and Fellows subsequent to the Boren Award. This section asked details on each position the Scholar or Fellow held after completing the Boren program. The survey allowed the respondent to enter details on up to six positions, including his or her current or most recent position. Respondents were asked to answer the survey based on their most recent award.

For each position, we asked details about the type of employment. Respondents were asked to indicate which of the following best described their employment:

- U.S. Federal Government (e.g., civilian employee)
- Federal contractor
- Educational institution
- State government
- Local government (e.g., city, county, school district)
- U.S. military service
- For-profit company or organization other than federal contractor
- Not-for-profit organization
- Federally funded research and development center (FFRDC)
- Other

Respondents were also asked for the year they began and left each type of position. In addition, if they selected U.S. Federal Government or federal contractor, they were asked an additional set of questions. Those who selected U.S. Federal Government were asked for information on the following:

- Name of agency
- Primary nature of the job
- Estimate of GS level or other pay scale when they started and left the agency (if they had left)
- Why they left employment with that agency (if they had left)

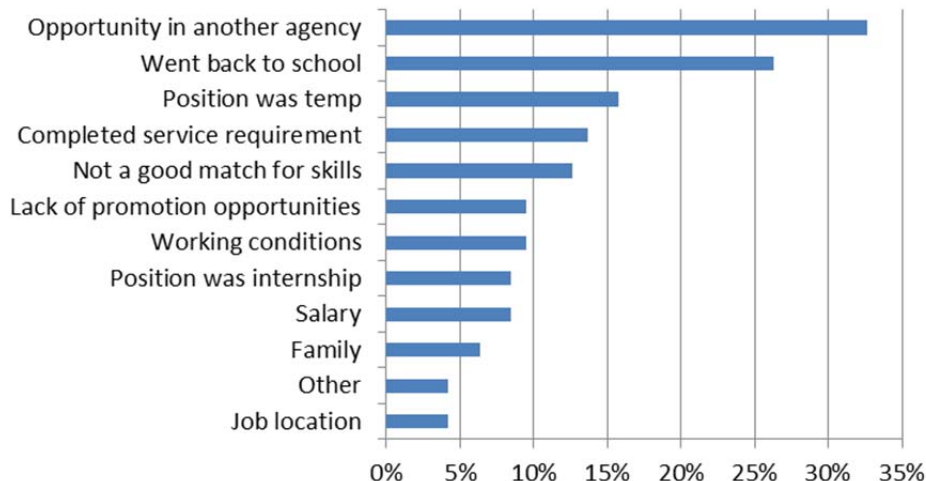
Here we present the results from this section of the survey that we believe will be the most useful to DLNSEO. We focus on Scholars and Fellows who have held careers in the Federal Government, as well as where Scholars and Fellows are currently employed.

## First position in Federal Government

We first looked at Scholars and Fellows who began their employment in the Federal Government. We found 191 respondents who listed their first post-Boren position as employment with the U.S. Federal Government. Of these 191 respondents, 49 percent were still employed with the agency they started in, while 51 percent had left their first agency at the time of the survey.

In Figure 17, we present the reasons given for leaving by the respondents who left their first Federal Government position. Respondents were asked to check all reasons that apply.

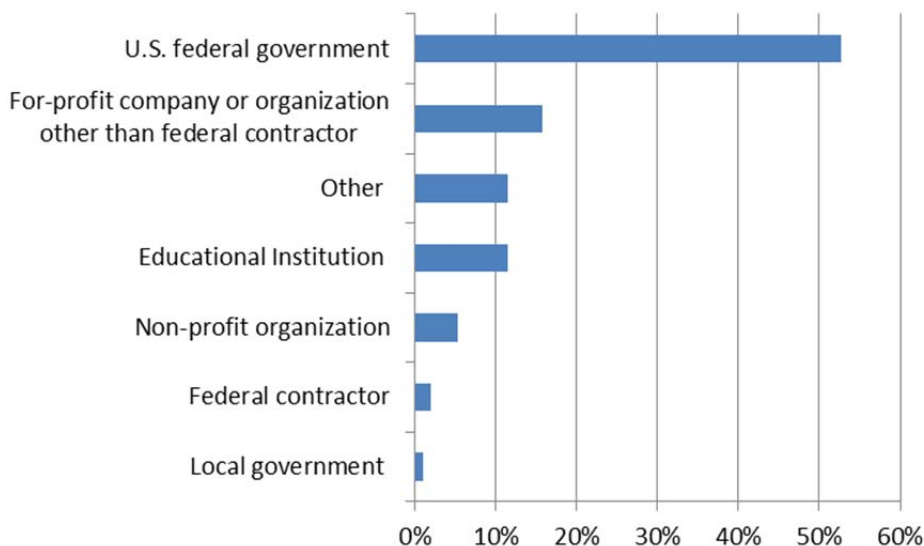
Figure 17. Respondents who had a first post-Boren position in the Federal Government—reasons for leaving



We found that 33 percent of those who left their first position in the Federal Government indicated that they left the position for an opportunity in another federal agency. The next reason given for leaving the Federal Government was going back to school, followed by the position being temporary and completing the service requirement.

Next, we looked at where those who left the Federal Government went following that position (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Employment after leaving first Federal Government position



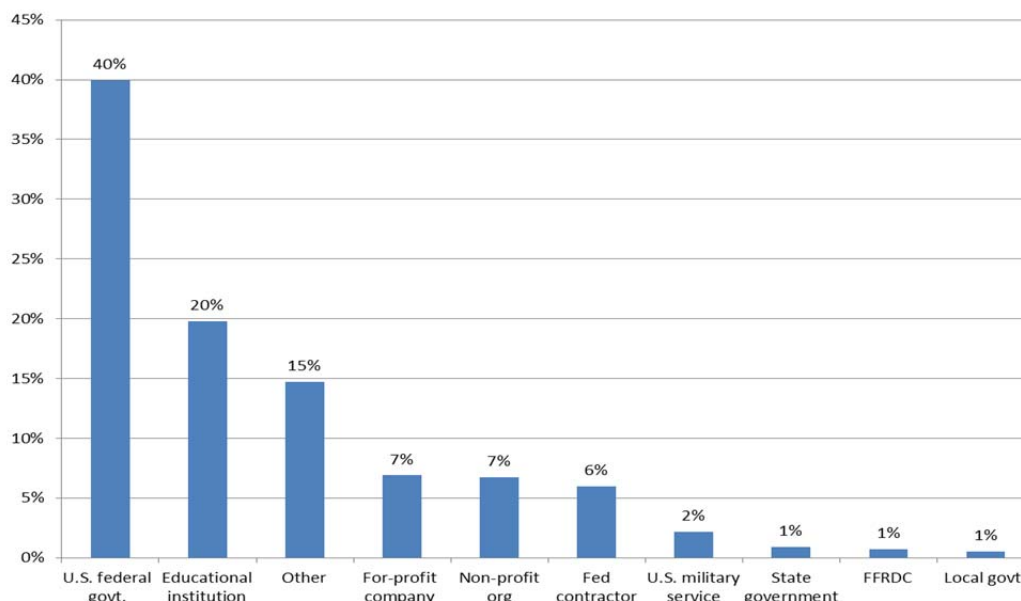
We found that, of those respondents who indicated they had left their first Federal Government position, 52 percent indicated that their next position was in the Federal Government. These data seem to indicate that respondents who started in the Federal Government, tended to stay in the Federal Government through their next position, even if they moved on to a different federal agency.

## Current or most recent employment

Next, we focus on what respondents indicated as their current or most recent position (see Figure 19).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> We use “current or most recent position” because some respondents did not indicate that the last position they entered was their current position. Others indicated they had left the last position entered but did not include any additional employment information after that position.

Figure 19. Current or most recent position



We found that 40 percent of respondents listed a current or most recent position in the Federal Government, followed by 20 percent of respondents who indicated a current or most recent position in an educational institution. The category of “other” followed with 15 percent of respondents and included a wide range of responses, from stay-at-home parents to those who are self-employed. Seven percent of respondents indicated that they are now at a for-profit company (other than a federal contractor), 7 percent are with a not-for-profit organization, 6 percent are with a federal contractor, and 2 percent are active duty military. The remaining percentages of respondents are with a state government (1 percent), an FFRDC (1 percent), and a local government (1 percent).

Next, we looked at the 220 respondents who indicated that their current or most recent position was in the Federal Government to examine which agencies employed them. Of the 220 respondents who indicated their current or most recent position was with the Federal Government, 212 provided the name of the department or agency. Table 4 lists the federal department or agency along with the number and percentage of Boren alumni who listed the department or agency as their current or most recent position.

Table 4. Current or last known position in the U.S. Federal Government

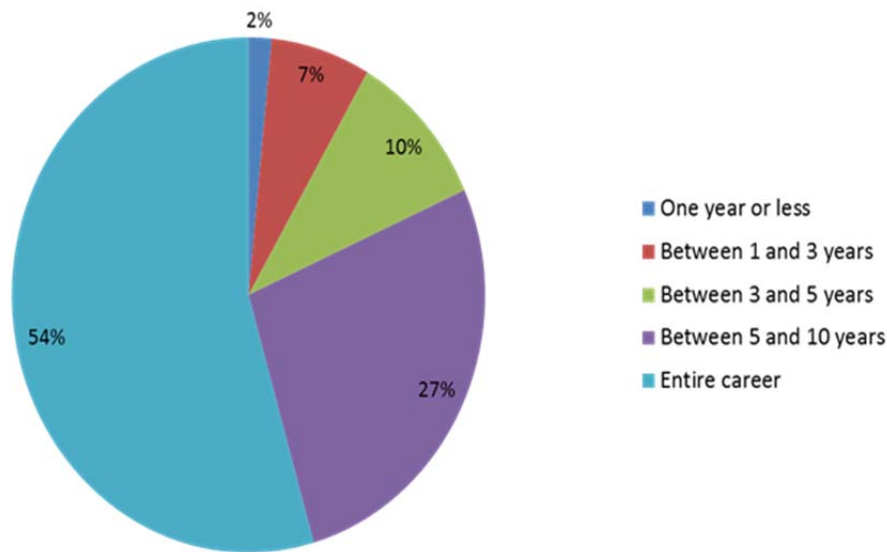
Department or agency	Number of Boren alumni	Percentage
Department of State	72	34
Department of Defense (DOD)	47	22
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)	14	7
Department of Homeland Security (DHS)	13	6
Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)	9	4
Intelligence Community (unspecified)	7	3
Department of Justice	6	3
Department of Treasury	6	3
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	5	2
Department of Commerce	5	2
Peace Corps	4	2
U.S. Congress	4	2
Department of Agriculture	3	1
Department of the Interior	3	1
Department of Veterans Affairs	3	1
Federal Reserve	3	1
Federal Judiciary	2	1
Corporation for National and Community Service	1	1
Department of Health and Human Services	1	1
Department of Transportation	1	1
Environmental Protection Agency	1	1
Millennium Challenge Corporation	1	1
National Science Foundation	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100%</b>

We found that 34 percent of respondents indicated a current or most recent position in the Federal Government with the Department of State, followed by 22 percent of respondents at DOD. Since we found a roughly equal percentage of respondents who fulfilled their service requirement at the Department of State and at DOD, this seems to indicate some movement to the Department of State within our respondent population. Also in the top five was USAID with 7 percent of the respondents to this question, followed by 6 percent at DHS, 4 percent at CIA, and 3 percent in the intelligence community (unspecified).

## Contribution to Federal Service

Next, we looked at those who had current or most recent positions in the Federal Government and how long these respondents indicated that they intended to stay with the Federal Government. Of the 220 respondents who listed a current or most recent position in the Federal Government, 191 respondents answered the question on intent to stay (Figure 20).

Figure 20. Amount of time intending to stay in the U.S. Federal Government



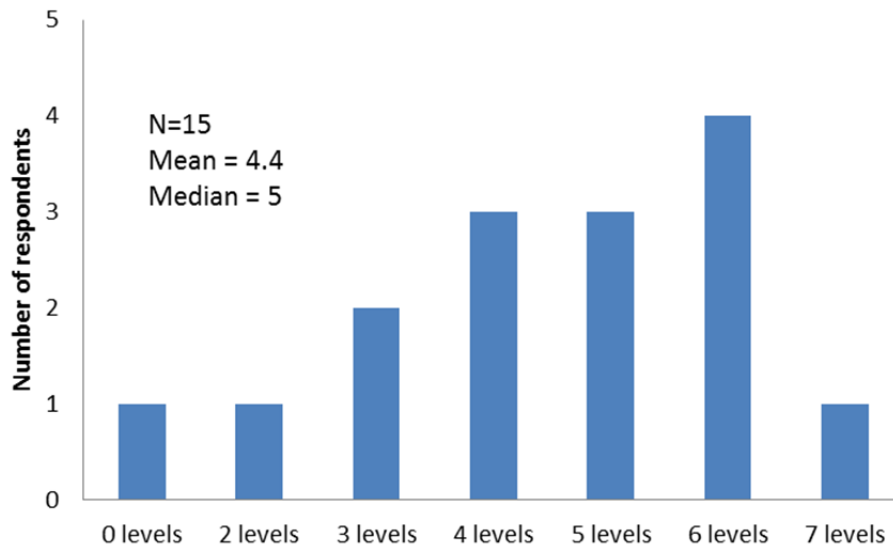
Of the 191 people who answered the question on intent to stay employed in the U.S. Federal Government, we found that 54 percent indicated an intent to stay the entire career, while 27 percent indicated they would stay 5 to 10 years, 10 percent said they would stay 3 to 5 years, 7 percent expressed an intent to stay 1 to 3 years, and 2 percent responded that they would stay 1 year or less.

We also looked at respondents who had careers in the U.S. Federal Government of 10 to 15 years and of 5 to 9 years. To be included in one of these groups, the respondents had to have a first and current or most recent position in the Federal Government, and any positions between the first and current or most recent had to also be in the Federal Government.



We found 17 respondents who had careers of 10 to 15 years in the Federal Government. Of these, 12 are still employed with the same federal agency where they started and 5 have moved on to a different federal agency. We also looked at the GS levels provided by these respondents to determine if they had been promoted throughout their federal careers and how their career had advanced (Figure 21).

Figure 21. Number of GS levels advanced for respondents with federal careers of 10 to 15 years

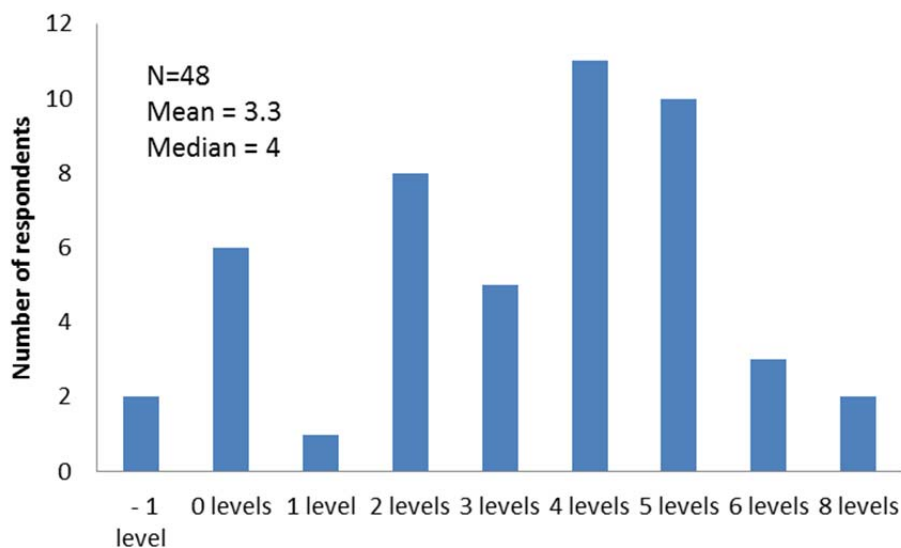


We found that 15 of the 17 respondents who had careers in the Federal Government of 10 to 15 years answered the questions on GS or pay scale levels. Of these 15 respondents, the average number of GS levels advanced was 4.4 and the median was 5 GS levels.

We also looked at advancement for those in the 5- to 9-year career group. We found 54 respondents who had careers of 5 to 9 years in the Federal Government. Of those 54 respondents, 44 are still employed by the same agency where they started and 10 have moved on to different federal agencies. We also looked at the GS levels provided by these respondents to determine if they had been promoted throughout their federal careers and how their careers had advanced (Figure 22).

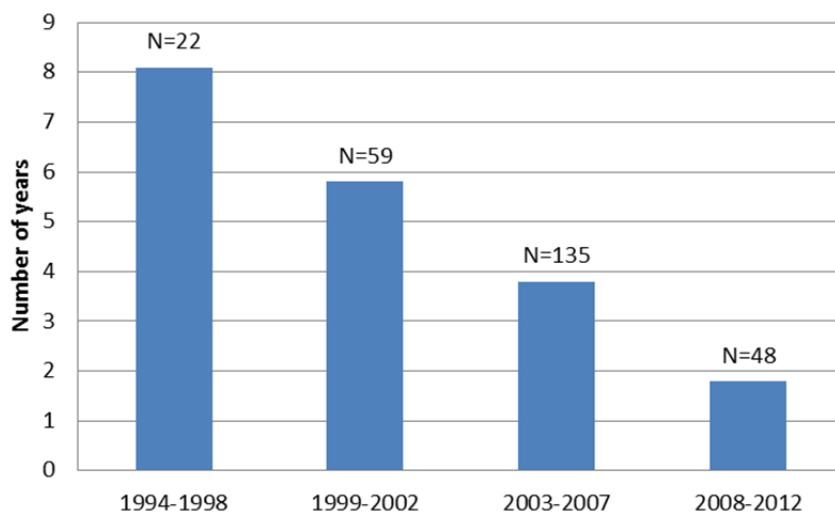
For this group, we found that 48 of the 54 respondents who had careers in the Federal Government of 5 to 9 years answered the questions on GS or pay scale levels. Of these 48 respondents, the average number of GS levels advanced was 3.3 and the median was 4 GS levels.

Figure 22. Number of GS levels advanced for respondents with federal careers of 5 to 9 years



Next, we calculated the average years of federal service by year groups. Here we used the year groups of 1994 through 1998, 1999 through 2002, 2003 through 2007, and 2008 through 2012. For this analysis, we looked at everyone with any Federal Government employment and calculated the average number of years of federal employment by these year groups (Figure 23).

Figure 23. Average number of years of federal service



The 22 respondents who received their Boren Awards from 1994 to 1998 and who had federal service had an average of 8.1 years. The 59 respondents who received Boren Awards from 1999 to 2002 and who had federal service had 5.8 average years of federal service, the 135 respondents who received their awards from 2003 to 2007 had an average of 3.8 years, and the awardees from 2008 to 2012 had an average of 1.8 years.

## First post-Boren position and current or most recent position

Finally, we looked at all respondents' first post-Boren positions as well as their current or most recent positions to examine movement within career paths (Table 5).

Table 5. First and current or most recent position

	U.S. Fed. Govt.	Edu. inst.	Fed. con- trac- tor	FFRDC	For- profit co.	Local govt.	Non- profit org.	Other	State govt.	U.S. mili- tary	Total (first posi- tion)
U.S. Fed. Govt.	<b>146</b>	11	2		15	1	5	11			<b>191</b>
Edu. inst.	13	<b>87</b>			6		8	11			<b>125</b>
Fed. con- tractor	24	4	25		4	1	1	8	1		<b>68</b>
FFRDC		2		4			1				<b>7</b>
For-profit co.	19	1			5		1	6			<b>32</b>
Local govt.	1	1			1	1					<b>4</b>
Nonprofit org.	16	2	4		5		20	11	2		<b>60</b>
Other								32			<b>32</b>
State govt.	1	1			1			1	2		<b>6</b>
U.S. mili- tary			2		1		1	1		12	<b>17</b>
<b>Total (current position)</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>542</b>

To illustrate this table, the first row indicates that 191 respondents had a first position in the Federal Government. The first column indicates that 220 respondents

are currently in the Federal Government. Of the 191 respondents who started in the Federal Government, 146 are still there, while 11 respondents who started in the Federal Government are now at educational institutions, 2 are at federal contractors, and so on.

Further, 125 respondents had a first position at an educational institution. Of those, 87 are still at educational institutions, and there are a total of 109 respondents who had a current or most recent position at an educational institution. Eleven of those currently at an educational institution started in the Federal Government, 4 started at federal contractors, 2 started at FFRDCs, and so on.

There isn't as much movement as one might expect from Federal Government positions to federal contractor positions among the respondents. There is some movement in the other direction, however, from federal contractor positions to Federal Government positions.

Again, these results illustrate that those who start in the Federal Government tend to stay there. If the goal of the Boren program is for Scholars and Fellows to have long careers in the Federal Government, DLNSEO should continue to place an emphasis on helping interested awardees secure their first positions in the Federal Government.

## Summary and Conclusions

In summary, we discovered that the majority of respondents to the survey found the Boren program to be influential or very influential on their career paths in terms of the skills and perspectives gained through the program. These skills included language and regional proficiency, increased awareness and commitment to U.S. national security, increased awareness and commitment to international affairs, self-assurance in one's position as a global citizen, and self-assurance in one's ability to be a consensus builder and partner. We found this to be true for Scholars and Fellows as well as earlier and more recent graduates of the program.

We also found that respondents who began their careers in the Federal Government tended to stay in the Federal Government. If the goal of the Boren program is for Scholars and Fellows to have careers in the Federal Government, emphasis should be placed on helping awardees secure Federal Government positions to begin their employment. Several employers we interviewed noted that NSEP might want to consider changes to the program that would set aside a number of positions in key federal agencies for Boren Scholars and Fellows, similar to the structure of the PMF. Additional work could also be done to explore the needs of employers in the national security community and to attempt to align the supply of Boren Scholars and Fellows with the demand for their skill sets.

In addition, while we determined that 40 percent of respondents had current or most recent positions in the Federal Government, we heard through our interviews with Boren alumni as well as the open-ended responses that there was some frustration in the ability to secure Federal Government positions. Because of the recent hiring freezes and sequestration, NSEP will need to continue to be vigilant about helping Boren Scholars and Fellows secure Federal Government employment. If an increasing number of Scholars and Fellows have significant difficulty finding federal employment in a constrained budget environment, it could be detrimental to the goals of the Boren program.

Finally, although it is evident from our interviews and the survey responses that the NSEP office has increased the support provided to Boren Scholars and Fellows in recent years as well as outreach and education about the Boren program, it is vital that NSEP continue to focus on these efforts. We recommend the following:

- NSEP should continue its outreach efforts and focus on educating employers about the Boren program and the special hiring authorities afforded to Boren

graduates. Due to staff turnover at federal agencies and in human resource departments, it is critical that NSEP continually reach out to federal agencies to educate them on the Boren program as well as the special hiring authorities afforded to Boren awardees and how to use them.

- NSEP should also continue to focus on hosting career fairs, providing networking opportunities, and assisting Boren awardees in finding employment, particularly in the Federal Government. If a goal of the Boren program is for Scholars and Fellows to have careers in the Federal Government, emphasis should be placed on helping awardees secure Federal Government positions to begin their careers. This is necessary because the results of the survey seem to indicate that those who begin their career in the Federal Government tend to stay in the Federal Government.
- In addition, NSEP should carefully consider the number of employees they have dedicated to assisting Boren awardees with job searches, holding career fairs, and providing outreach efforts to employers to determine if additional resources are necessary.
- NSEP should also reach out to all Boren alumni through newsletters and partnering with the Boren Forum to maintain a vibrant network of Boren alumni and to broaden networking opportunities for all awardees, not just for recent graduates.

## Appendix A: Survey Screenshots

Boren Survey

**Demographic Questions**

For each of your Boren awards, please answer the following questions:

	In what year did you receive the Boren award?	For which language did you receive the Boren award?	In what country did you use the Boren award?	For what amount of time were you funded to study abroad?	What degree were you pursuing at the time of the award?	In which discipline was the degree?
Boren Scholarship 1	Select: ▾	Select: ▾	Select: ▾	Select: ▾	Select: ▾	Select: ▾
Boren Scholarship 2	Select: ▾	Select: ▾	Select: ▾	Select: ▾	Select: ▾	Select: ▾
Boren Fellowship	Select: ▾	Select: ▾	Select: ▾	Select: ▾	Select: ▾	Select: ▾

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Boren Survey

**Applying for a Boren Scholarship or Fellowship**

How did you learn about the Boren program?  
(Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Academic advisor or faculty member
- ☐ Internet (Facebook, twitter)
- ☐ Other Boren award recipient
- ☐ National Security Education Program (NSEP) or Boren outreach event
- ☐ National Youth Leadership Forum
- ☐ Other federal scholarship program (Critical Language Scholarship, Startalk, etc.)
- ☐ Other

If you checked other above, please specify here:

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Boren Survey

What other scholarships, fellowships, or awards did you receive in addition to Boren?  
(Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Flagship Fellowship
- ☐ Benjamin A. Gilman International scholarship
- ☐ Charles B. Rangel International Affairs fellowship
- ☐ Critical Language Scholarship (CLS)
- ☐ Foreign Language and Area Studies program (FLAS)
- ☐ Freeman award
- ☐ Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad fellowship
- ☐ Fulbright fellowship
- ☐ Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GANN)
- ☐ International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) award
- ☐ Jacob K. Javits award
- ☐ National Security Language Initiative for Youth award
- ☐ National Science Foundation fellowship or grant
- ☐ Social Science Research Council fellowship or grant
- ☐ Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs fellowship
- ☐ Mellon fellowship
- ☐ University departmental/division grant
- ☐ I did not receive any other scholarships, fellowships, or awards
- ☐ Other

If you checked other above, please specify here:

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Boren Survey

Did you receive an Office of Personnel Management Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF)?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

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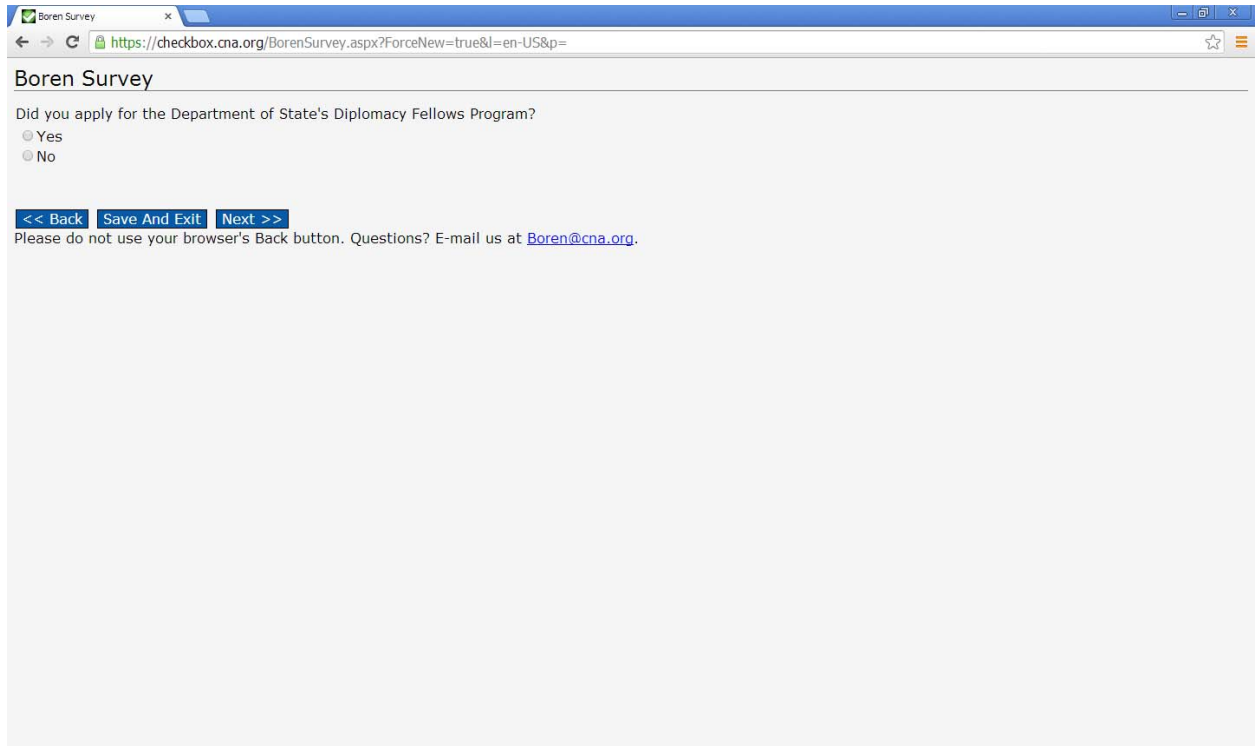
Boren Survey

Did you use your PMF position to satisfy your Boren service requirement position?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

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Boren Survey

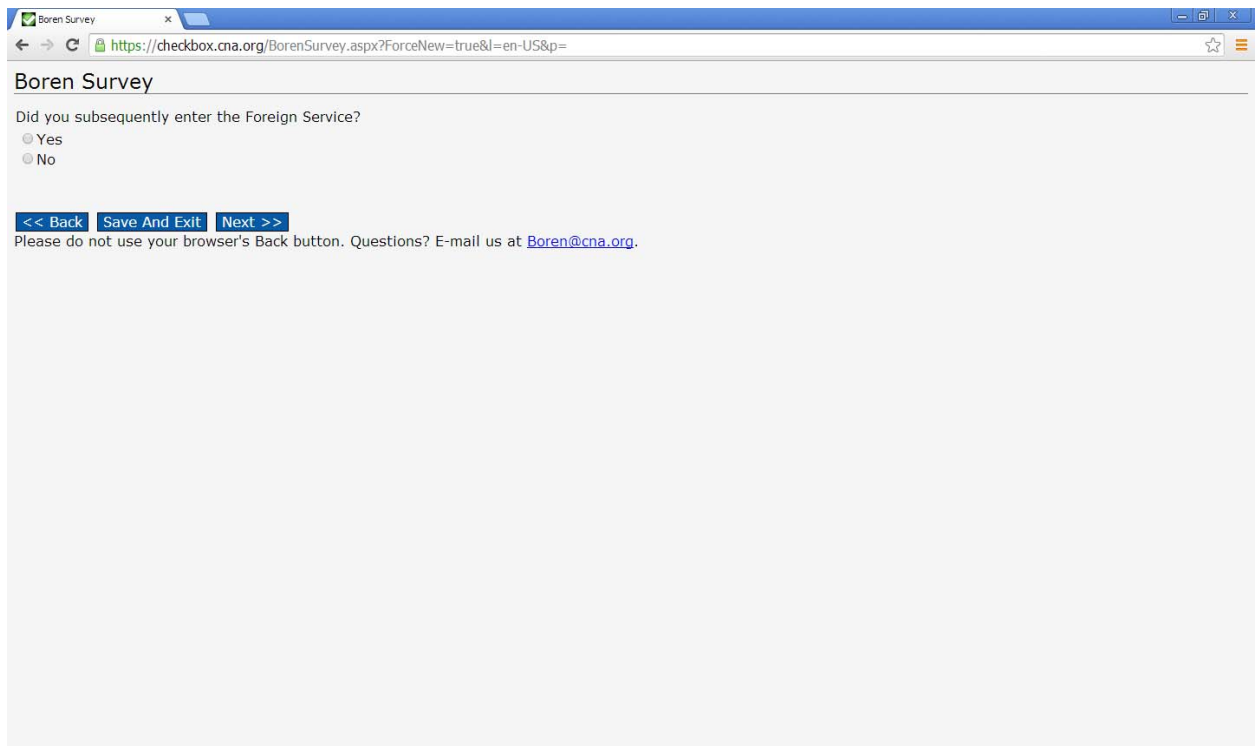
Did you apply for the Department of State's Diplomacy Fellows Program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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Boren Survey

Did you subsequently enter the Foreign Service?

☐ Yes

☐ No

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Boren Survey

What attracted you to the Boren Awards program?  
(Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Opportunity to work in the federal government (service requirement)
- ☐ Language study
- ☐ Regional study
- ☐ Funding and support
- ☐ Opportunity to connect with my heritage/background
- ☐ Other

If you checked other above, please specify here:

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Boren Survey

If you hadn't been exposed to the Boren Awards program, would you have considered working in the federal government?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Looking back on your education, how would you evaluate your experience as a Boren Scholar or Fellow in terms of influencing your career path?

- ☐ Most significant experience in terms of influencing career path
- ☐ Important experience in terms of influencing career path
- ☐ Somewhat important experience in terms of influencing career path
- ☐ Did not influence career path

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Boren Survey

**Post-Boren Education and Employment**

In this section, you will be asked questions about your experiences and career path after your **most recent** Boren award. These questions will include your post-Boren educational and professional experiences.

Did you pursue any additional education following the completion of the degree you were working on at the time of your Boren Scholarship or Fellowship?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

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Boren Survey

For each degree or certificate enter the years that you pursued this education and the primary field of study:

		From	To	Field of study
PhD	<input type="checkbox"/>	Select: ▼	Select: ▼	Select: ▼
Master's Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Select: ▼	Select: ▼	Select: ▼
J.D.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Select: ▼	Select: ▼	Select: ▼
MBA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Select: ▼	Select: ▼	Select: ▼
Bachelor's Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Select: ▼	Select: ▼	Select: ▼
Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Select: ▼	Select: ▼	Select: ▼

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Boren Survey

Which of the following best describes your **first** post-Boren award employment?

- ☐ U.S. federal government (e.g., civilian employee)
- ☐ Federal contractor
- ☐ Educational institution
- ☐ State government
- ☐ Local government (e.g., city, county, school district)
- ☐ U.S. military service, active duty or Commissioned Corps Government
- ☐ For-profit company or organization other than federal contractor
- ☐ Non-profit organization
- ☐ Federally funded research and development center (FFRDC)
- ☐ Other

If you checked other above, please specify here:

In what year did you start this position?

Select: ▼

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## For those who indicated that they had Federal Government positions

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://checkbox.cna.org/BorenSurvey.aspx?ForceNew=true&l=en-US&p=>. The page title is "Boren Survey". The form contains the following fields and options:

- For which agency did you work?  
Select:
- If the agency doesn't appear in the list above, please specify:
- What was the primary nature of this job?  
Select:
- What is your best estimate of your GS level when you began employment with this agency?  
Select:
- If other pay scale (Foreign Service, NSPS, etc.) please specify pay grade:
- Are you still employed with this agency?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No

Navigation buttons: << Back, Save And Exit, Next >>

Please do not use your browser's Back button. Questions? E-mail us at [Boren@cna.org](mailto:Boren@cna.org).

## For those who indicated that they had federal contractor positions

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://checkbox.cna.org/BorenSurvey.aspx?ForceNew=true&l=en-US&p=>. The page title is "Boren Survey". The form contains the following fields and options:

- What is/was the name of the company?
- What federal agency was the contract for? (If the contract was for more than one agency, please select the primary agency the contract was for.)  
Select:
- If the agency doesn't appear in the list above, please specify:
- What was the primary nature of the job?  
Select:
- What is your best estimate of your GS equivalent level when you entered employment with this company?  
Select:
- Are you still employed with this company?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No

Navigation buttons: << Back, Save And Exit, Next >>

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## For those who indicated that they were still in their Federal Government positions

Boren Survey

What is your current GS level?  
Select:

If other pay scale (Foreign Service, NSPS, etc.) please specify pay grade:

How long do you intend to stay with the federal government?

- ☐ One year or less
- ☐ Between 1 and 3 years
- ☐ Between 3 and 5 years
- ☐ Between 5 and 10 years
- ☐ Entire career

Did this position fulfill your Boren service requirement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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## For those who indicated they had left their Federal Government positions

Boren Survey

What is your best estimate of your GS level at the time you left employment with this agency?  
Select:

If other pay scale (Foreign Service, NSPS, etc.) please specify pay grade:

Why did you leave employment with this agency?  
(Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Not a good match for skills
- ☐ Opportunity in another agency/employer
- ☐ Change in career or professional interests
- ☐ Went back to school
- ☐ Job location/duty station
- ☐ Position was an internship
- ☐ Position was temporary (e.g., schedule A(r) appointment)
- ☐ Family-related reasons (e.g., children, spouse's job moved)
- ☐ Completed service requirement
- ☐ Salary and benefits
- ☐ Lack of career/promotion opportunities
- ☐ Working conditions (e.g., hours, working environment)
- ☐ Other

If you checked other above, please specify here:

In what year did you leave?  
Select:

Did this position fulfill your Boren service requirement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Boren Survey

<https://checkbox.cna.org/BorenSurvey.aspx?ForceNew=true&l=en-US&p=>

### Service Requirement Position

The following section asks questions about the position you used to fulfill your service requirement.

If you received more than one Boren scholarship, or both a Boren scholarship and fellowship, please answer the remaining questions about **your most recent award only**.

Did you use the NSEP office as a resource when applying for jobs?

☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Don't know

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Boren Survey

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### Why did you accept your service requirement position?

(Check all that apply)

☐ Good match for skill set  
☐ Desire to work in that agency/employer or interest in specific position  
☐ Need to fulfill the service requirement in the specified amount of time  
☐ Salary and benefits  
☐ Career/promotion potential  
☐ It was the only position offered  
☐ Job location/duty station  
☐ Other

If you checked other above, please specify here:

Were special hiring authorities (e.g., Schedule A(r), National Defense Authorization Act FY10, National Defense Authorization Act FY13) used to hire you to your service requirement position?

☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Don't know

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Boren Survey

My Boren Scholarship/Fellowship helped me get my service requirement position.

☐ Strongly agree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Neither agree nor disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Strongly disagree

My Boren Scholarship/Fellowship helped me succeed in my service requirement position.

☐ Strongly agree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Neither agree nor disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Strongly disagree

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Boren Survey

What skills gained while completing your Boren Scholarship/Fellowship did you use in your service requirement position?  
(Check all that apply.)

☐ Language proficiency  
☐ Regional proficiency  
☐ Cross-cultural understanding  
☐ Writing  
☐ Research  
☐ Problem solving  
☐ Strategic planning  
☐ Interpersonal communication  
☐ Ability to perform under pressure  
☐ Building project time tables  
☐ Monitoring progress against agreed upon goals  
☐ Confidence in adapting to new/unfamiliar settings  
☐ Professionalism  
☐ Didn't acquire skills during Boren  
☐ Didn't use skills acquired during Boren  
☐ Other

If you checked other above, please specify here:

Are you still working in the position you used to fulfill your service requirement?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

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Boren Survey

**Current employment**

This section now asks questions about your current or most recent employment.

Having a Boren Scholarship/Fellowship helped me to excel or succeed in my current or most recent position.

☐ Strongly agree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Neither agree nor disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Strongly disagree

Having a Boren Scholarship/Fellowship helped me get my current or most recent position.

☐ Strongly agree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Neither agree nor disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Strongly disagree

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Boren Survey

What skills gained while completing your Boren Scholarship/Fellowship do you use in your current position or did you use in your most recent position?  
(Check all that apply.)

☐ Language proficiency  
☐ Regional proficiency  
☐ Cross-cultural understanding  
☐ Writing  
☐ Research  
☐ Problem solving  
☐ Strategic planning  
☐ Interpersonal communication  
☐ Ability to perform under pressure  
☐ Building project time tables  
☐ Monitoring progress against agreed upon goals  
☐ Adapting to new/unfamiliar settings  
☐ Professionalism  
☐ Didn't acquire skills during Boren  
☐ Don't use skills acquired during Boren  
☐ Other

If you checked other above, please specify here:

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Boren Survey

<https://checkbox.cna.org/BorenSurvey.aspx?ForceNew=true&l=en-US&p=>

### Career Path

Please rate how influential the skills and perspectives you gained as a result of your Boren award have been on your career path:

	Very Influential	Influential	Somewhat Influential	Not Influential	N/A
Skills acquired while overseas such as language and regional proficiency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased awareness and commitment to U.S. national security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased awareness and commitment to international affairs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-assurance in position as a global citizen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-assurance in ability to be a consensus-builder and partner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate how influential the resources you gained as a result of your Boren award have been on your career path:

	Very Influential	Influential	Somewhat Influential	Not Influential	N/A
Networking opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hiring authorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Boren awards name recognition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to the Boren Forum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eligibility in the Department of State's Diplomacy Fellows Program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Boren Survey

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Please indicate how likely it is the following would have occurred if you had not received scholarship/fellowship support. Without the support of this scholarship/fellowship, I still would have:

	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very unlikely	N/A
Pursued my language study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Achieved advanced language proficiency	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Traveled overseas for a language immersion/study abroad experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Received additional fellowships or awards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graduated from my degree program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Worked in the federal government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gone into the field in which I am currently employed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Received the offer for my service requirement position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accepted the offer for my service requirement position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Received the offer for my current or most recent position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accepted the offer for my current or most recent position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please do not include any Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in your response. Your opinion matters. Please share any additional thoughts below pertaining to your Boren Scholarship/Fellowship or the Boren Awards program.

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

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## Appendix B: Results for Scholars and Fellows

Here we present the results of selected questions by Scholar and Fellow responses (figures 24 through 35, and table 12).

Figure 24. How Scholars and Fellows learned about the Boren program

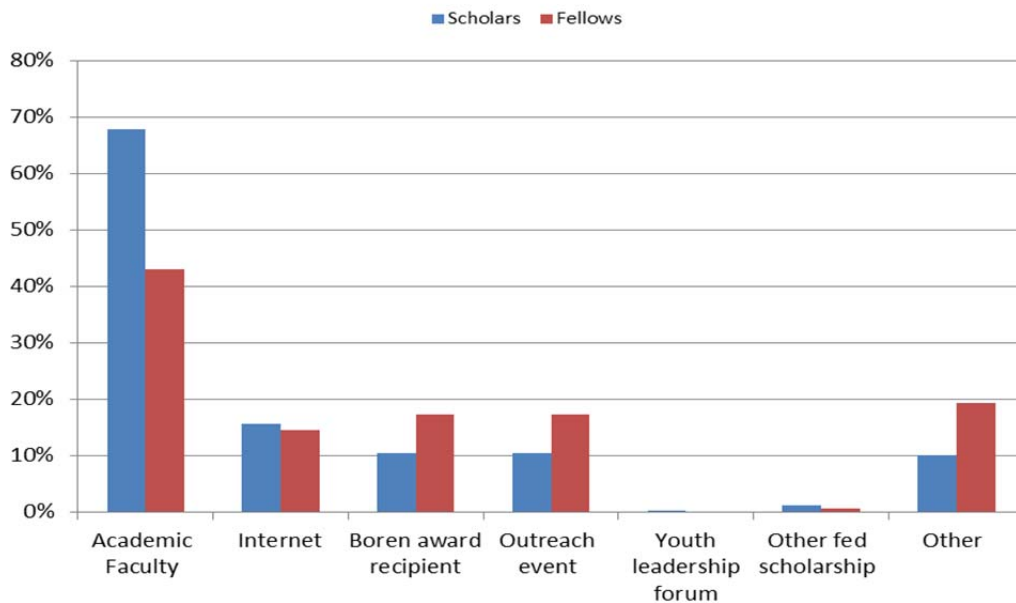


Figure 25. What attracted Scholars and Fellows to the Boren program

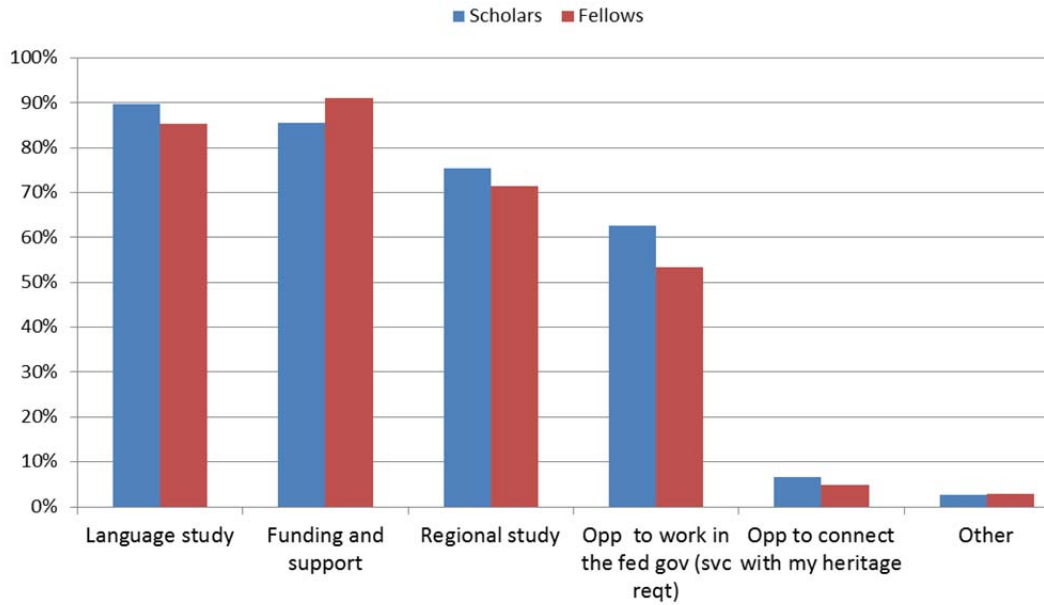


Figure 26. If you hadn't been exposed to the Boren program, would you have still considered working for the Federal Government?

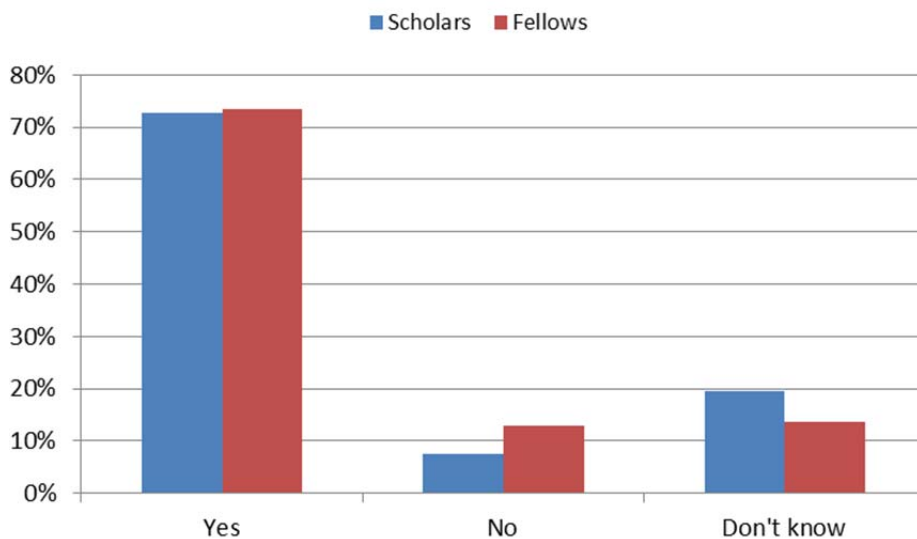


Figure 27. Did you use the NSEP office when applying for jobs?

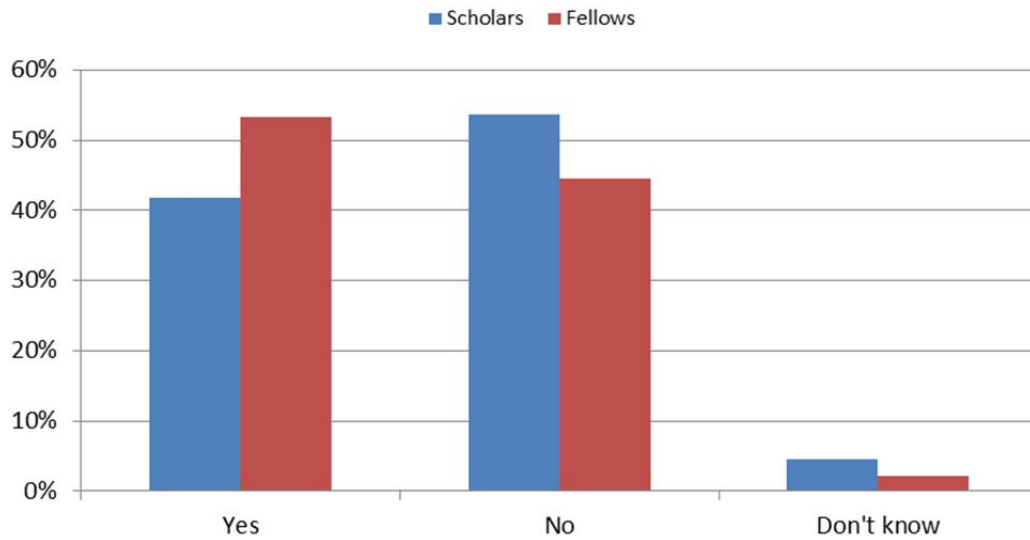


Figure 28. How did you use the NSEP office?

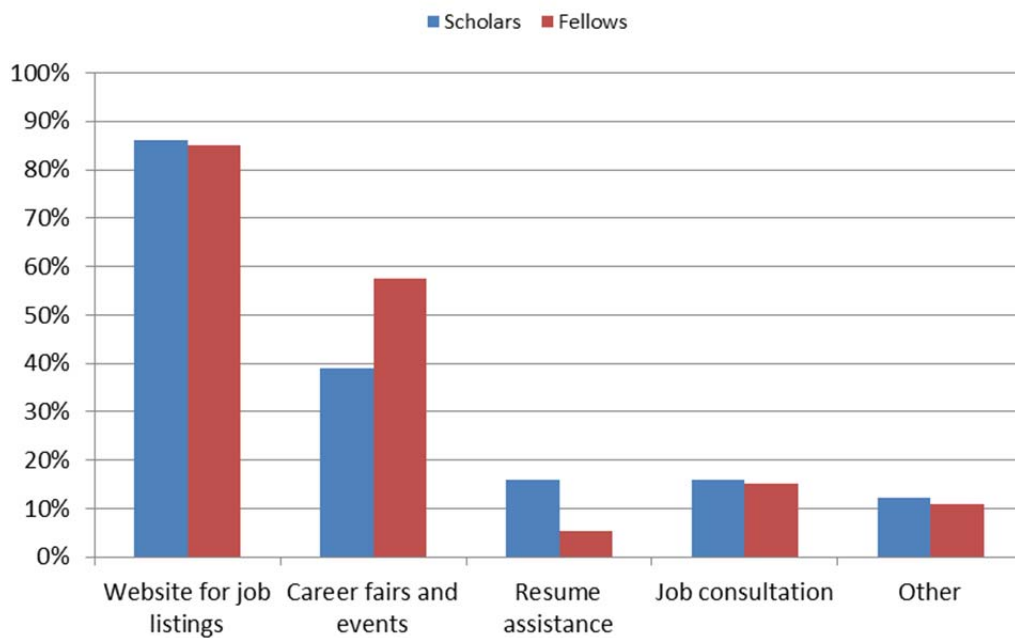


Figure 29. Looking back at your education, how would you rate your experience as a Boren Scholar or Fellow in terms of influencing your career path?

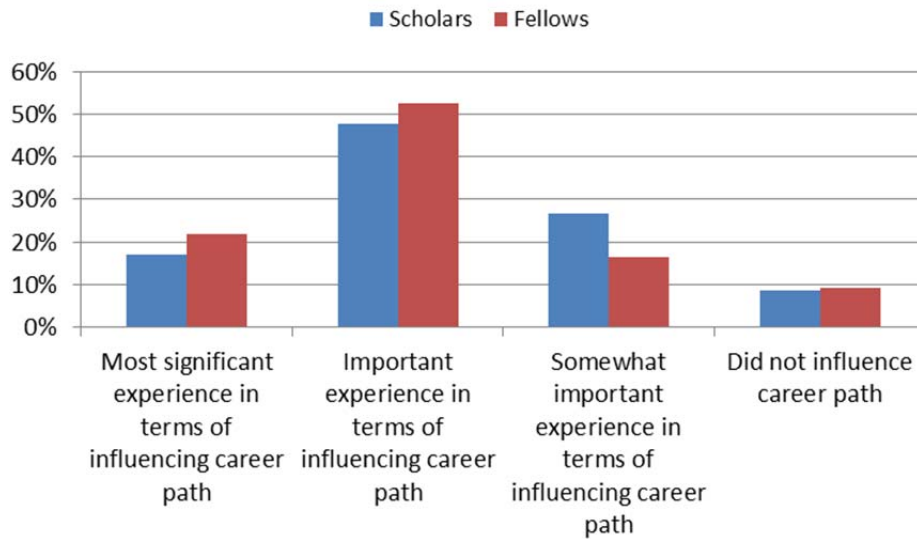


Figure 30. Were special hiring authorities used to hire you to your service requirement position?

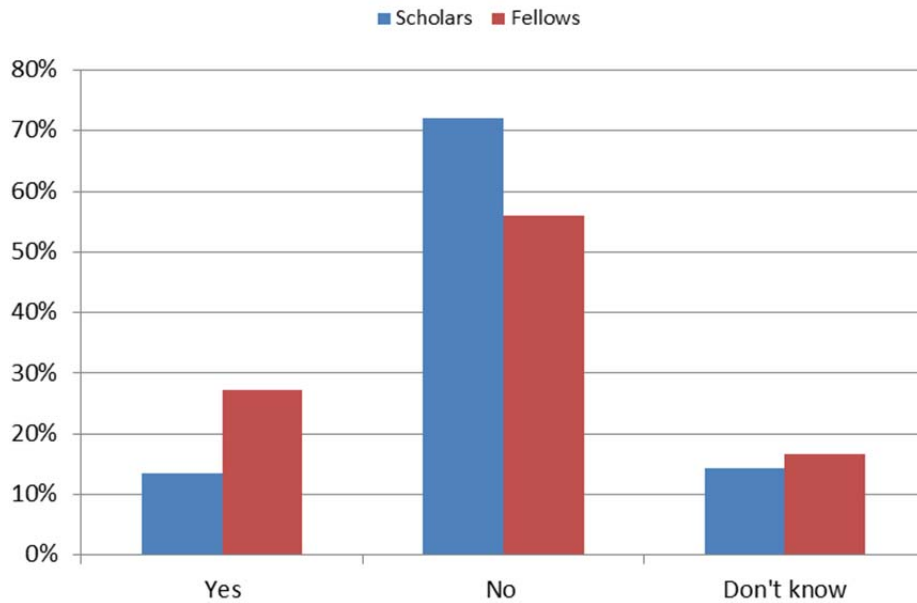


Figure 31. Why did you accept your service requirement position?

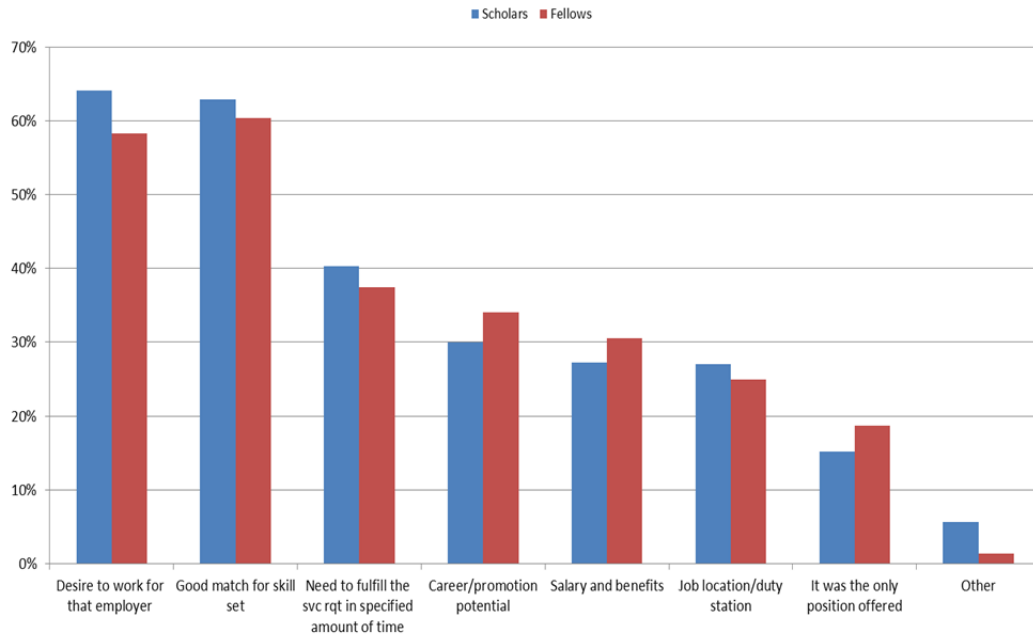


Figure 32. My Boren Scholarship/Fellowship helped me **get** my service requirement position

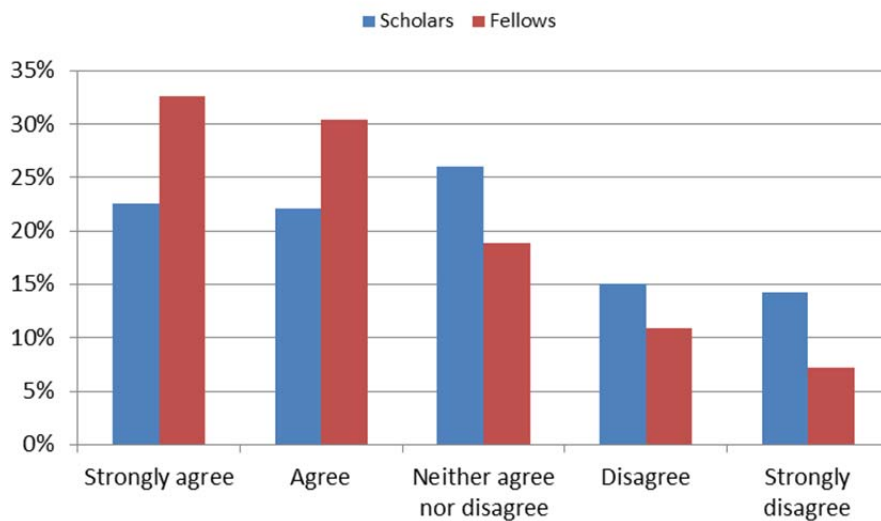




Figure 33. My Boren Scholarship/Fellowship helped me **succeed** in my service requirement position

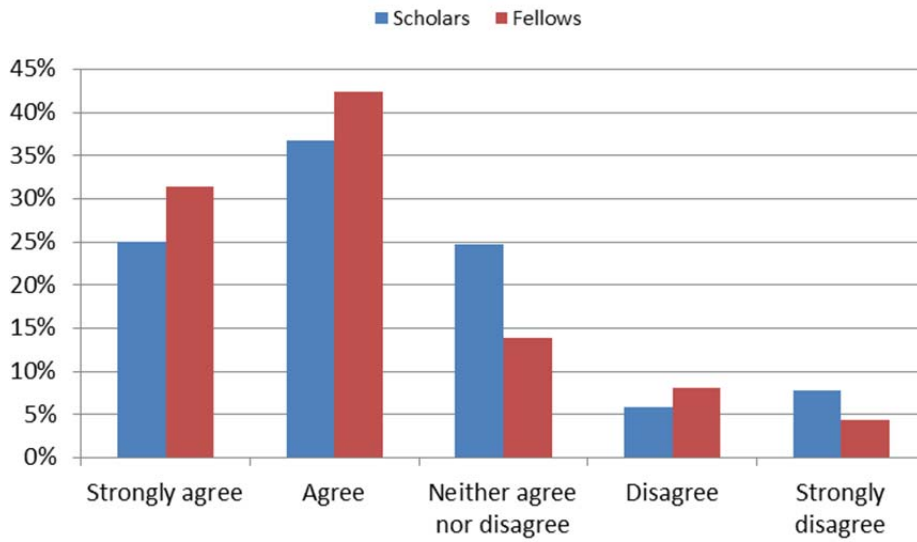


Table 12. Skills used in service requirement position

	Scholars (percentage)	Fellows (percentage)
Cross-cultural understanding	71	74
Regional proficiency	63	65
Confidence in adapting to new/unfamiliar settings	61	58
Language proficiency	57	58
Interpersonal communication	55	49
Problem solving	46	38
Writing	43	42
Research	41	44
Professionalism	38	38
Ability to perform under pressure	37	34
Strategic planning	20	26
Monitoring progress against agreed-upon goals	16	16
Building project timetables	13	17
Didn't use skills acquired during Boren	6	6
Other	1	2

Figure 34. My Boren Scholarship/Fellowship helped me **get** my current or most recent position

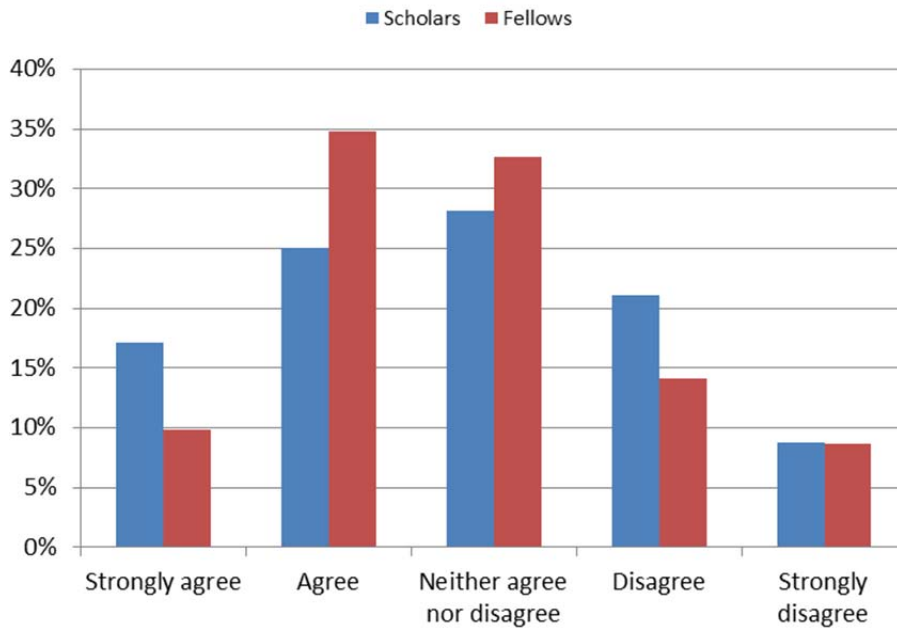
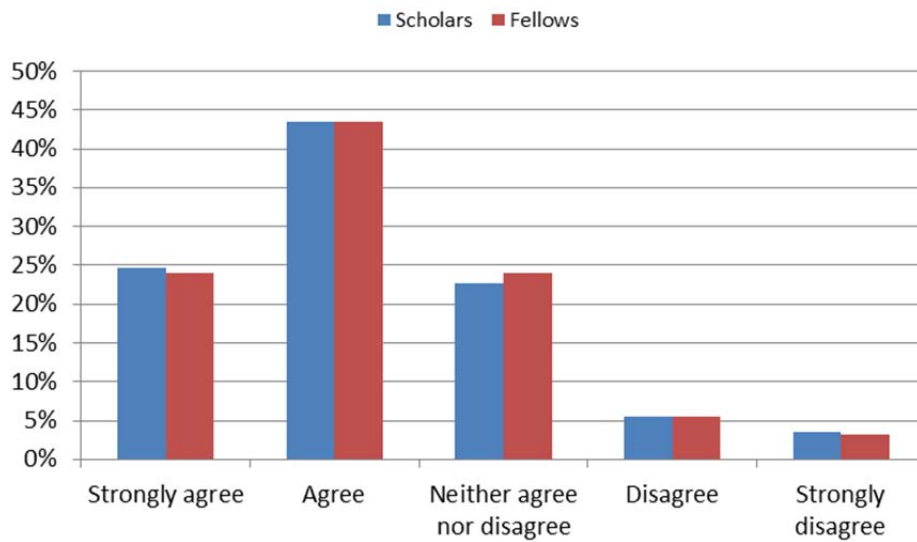


Figure 35. My Boren Scholarship/Fellowship helped me **succeed** in my current or most recent position



## Appendix C: Open-Ended Comments

In this section, we present the open-ended comments provided through the survey. Respondents were asked to share any additional thoughts they had on the Boren program. The comments are grouped by type of comment (positive, negative, both positive and negative) within each year grouping (1994-2004 and 2005-2012). Comments that were unrelated to the Boren program were not included.

### 1994-2004

#### Positive

1. The NSEP fellowship was a great opportunity for me to take my language skills from beginner to intermediate, and convinced me that I did want to make China studies central to my career.
2. After completing my NSEP/Boren Fellowship, I was able to obtain other fellowships to return to the country where I did my language study. I am pretty sure that I would not have been as appealing a candidate to those grantors without the original NSEP grant. When I went looking for jobs, I had four offers right away. Again, that's probably due at least in part to my language expertise and overseas experience.
3. I was able to use the fact that I had two fellowships (and could not double dip on living expenses) to use funding from one of the two fellowships to conduct a survey in the country where I lived. That survey produced data that got me hired (and changed the research agenda in a scholarly subfield)
4. A wonderful opportunity for me, well-administered program through [redacted], living abroad and completing dissertation research and then gaining a tenure-track position fulfilled my dreams. Thanks very much to all those who make the Boren program possible.
5. I now teach at a Hispanic-serving institution, and I try to send my students towards the Boren Awards program every year. It's a terrific program, even if I didn't take full advantage of it myself; I hope our legislative branch

understands how tremendously important these international student programs are. For my part, I want to work to make sure our Boren Fellows look like America's population, not just like the profiles of elite institutions on the country's coasts.

6. I thought the Boren scholarship was a wonderful opportunity and it focuses on a critical area--foreign language proficiency--in which Americans are deficient. My language proficiency progressed enormously due to the Boren scholarship, much more than it would have without it.
7. The Boren Award provides an extremely valuable opportunity for submersion in a foreign culture to study language. I value my experience most highly with the Boren and am very grateful for the opportunity it gave me. Although my field of study perhaps did not provide me with an obvious entry for a government position, I am sure I would have been a great candidate due to my Boren experience and rather regret not pursuing that opportunity more vigorously now. I highly recommend the Boren Scholarship program to my students. The Boren Scholarship/Fellowship and (I'm sure) the Awards program as well, are invaluable and I hope they will be available for many generations to come.
8. The Boren Fellowship was extremely influential in my life. As a [redacted] whose family had limited resources for college, I would have been unable to spend an entire year abroad in an immersion program. This language-immersion for one entire year set my study abroad experience apart from that of my peers at the time because it made me more competitive than the student who went to Spain for six months. Having studied abroad in [redacted] during what was a tumultuous time in U.S.-[redacted] relations not only gave me greater credibility with my colleagues at the [redacted agency], but also helped me to secure an internship at the U.S. Embassy in [redacted] prior to beginning graduate school. Furthermore, I benefited from the Program's stipends which allowed me to take unpaid positions to further my career goals. I cannot speak highly enough of the program. I even asked the [redacted agency] to highly consider taking on other Boren grads because I felt the program was worth promoting. In doing so, I explained the Schedule A hiring authority to them at the time. – Redacted
9. The Boren was a terrific resource in helping me get started in an exciting international career. The service obligation was less rigorously implemented in my time and I actually think that was a good thing, not only for me but also for the Boren mandate of creating a more internationally aware and engaged American citizenry.
10. The long-term language immersion was the most significant aspect of the NSEP (1997) award. I was a language major in college, but the exposure to the language was not sufficient in a state-side university to build fluency;

the NSEP scholarship provided the money that allows me to study abroad and gain fluency. Due to the NSEP, the DoD did not have to send me to DLI, saving thousands of dollars.

11. Although it is hard to credit any one event for everything that comes afterwards, I do see the Boren Scholarship as a pivotal and necessary contribution to my deeply engaging and satisfying federal service opportunities. It opened doors for me in a way nothing else would have, and each experience has built upon it.
12. I completed my service requirement through an internship, not through a permanent job position. I responded to this survey based on my full-time, permanent professional jobs, which did not reflect the internship. However, the internship was important to my later career development, and I am grateful for both the scholarship and the internship that I used to meet the service requirement. Also, in my current position, I have completed a number of projects for the US government of direct relevance to my study abroad with the Boren scholarship.
13. I credit the Boren Scholarship and the subsequent service requirement as the TOP influencer to my current career path, working in national security for the Department of Defense. The language study and service requirement led me to pursue an internship with State Dept., and I had not considered Federal Government prior to that. That led me to pursue a Master's degree in International Affairs, and based on my experience during my service requirement and skills learned during the scholarship, I sought a Federal Government position upon completion of my MA. I do not think I would be in my current position had I not received the Boren scholarship while in college. I have been working in the Federal Government in national security positions for over 10 years. During that time I completed 3 deployments, 2 language immersions, am preparing for a 6 month overseas assignment, and I love what I do.
14. I received a Boren Scholarship and benefited greatly from the hiring authority into Federal Government hard to fill posts. This experience was key in further international exposure, understanding of US grants and procedures and professional opportunities. It also enabled me to study abroad in a program I could not have afforded otherwise, which was a huge catalyst in my pursuing further language study and international career opportunities. I also received a Boren Fellowship, which was key in developing language proficiency and understanding of international development. These Boren awards have provided huge opportunities for me to progress along my career path.

15. I remain grateful to the National Security Education Program for providing my Boren opportunity. It was a valuable experience and I am glad to assist the program if asked.
16. Most importantly, the Boren Fellowship provided me practical, on-the-ground experience in the country I studied in. While my colleagues can speak abstractly about the country, I can vividly recall the country's nuanced character and complex personalities. Boren provided a formative experience in my graduate school years which continues to color my world perspective in my current career overseas.
17. The Boren Awards program was a godsend for me back in 1998-1999. It opened a whole new world of experiences and opportunities for me. It has given me many tools that have helped me cope with the mess that is my current employer.
18. The Boren fellowship was immensely valuable to me. It enabled me to spend more time overseas doing research. This benefited my dissertation in the short-term and, no less important, enhanced my language skills and understanding of that foreign society in the long-term.
19. This was an amazing program and without it I would not have had the opportunity to study abroad. Through the program, I gained understanding and appreciation for the blessing I have been given to have been born and to live in the United States of America. The entire experience majorly changed my life and my world view.
20. My Boren Scholarship thus far has had very little impact on my military career and I have not had the opportunity to leverage my experiences overseas into any kind of tangible product. However, that is due more to operational tempo/draw down in Afghanistan than anything else. I am submitting an application to join the [redacted] and I would think that my Boren experiences would carry much more weight with [redacted] than with the conventional force that I am currently a part of. If all goes well and I make the transition to the [redacted] side of the house, I expect to be using linguistic and cultural knowledge that I acquired through the Boren Scholarship on a daily basis.
21. The Boren Fellowship was critical in helping me finish my PhD because of the funding and language support it provided. I had absolutely no inclination to join the Federal Government before receiving the Boren Fellowship. Because of the Service Requirement, I found my ideal job and have completed almost 13 years in the same job. The Boren Forum serves an important and critical function in keeping me connected to the Boren community and allowing me to network and expand my understanding of

other federal jobs and perspectives. This continuing aspect of the fellowship experience is very important to me.

22. The Boren Fellowship was one of the most important academic/professional development opportunities that I have had. I am looking forward to continuing to be connected within the Boren Network.
23. The collaborations I established as a Boren Fellow during grad school have lasted for 15 years and are continuing. I routinely exchange grad students or participate in faculty exchanges with my collaborating institution and we have grants and projects together now. One of my own grad students also was awarded the Boren Fellowship and that helped continue our collaborations with the [redacted]. For example, I'm going back there next week again to teach in the [redacted], and more [redacted] students and faculty will visit my lab this summer. I think that my ability to connect [redacted] students with other labs in the U.S. (not so much my personal lab, my postdoc institution especially which was a world leader) over the years have really advanced their science and they are doing much higher quality work now than when I first went. So I believe it has really benefitted them as well as me to have the [redacted]-US connection. One [redacted] student that I mentored was a coauthor with me in a high impact journal, and he said that helped him to get his current faculty position in the [redacted]. He has trained my student in some very advanced methods and really helped her research stay on the cutting edge. So it's been a great 2-way exchange that benefitted everyone.
24. While I have remained in education, my teaching and advising of students working and studying abroad has been greatly influenced by my having been a Boren Fellow. I have also benefitted from the networking and volunteer work I have done for Boren and the Institute of International Education. I continue to do research in [redacted] where I was a fellow and 15 years later still speak [redacted] fairly well when I am in [redacted].
25. Without my Boren-funded study abroad experience in China, I would have been another Poli Sci major with a JD--not all that specialized. The China experience helped me pursue a more specialized and fulfilling path as an international attorney with an East Asia focus. This has opened doors for me to live and travel throughout Asia as an attorney for an American multinational. I'd still probably be a lawyer without the Boren program, but I wouldn't be having as much fun and I wouldn't be the globalist I've become.
26. Boren was a tremendous opportunity for me. Without it, I would have been unlikely to have achieved advanced language proficiency or a strong understanding of my area. I do have one suggestion/concern about how the Boren has evolved since I received it. My understanding is that Boren awardees can no longer be exempted from the service requirement if they

made a good faith effort and instead found work in higher education. I think this is a mistake. Having people who received the Boren go to work in higher education is still beneficial to US national security in many ways. I would never be teaching classes on a region of critical importance to the US if it weren't for Boren. Because of Boren, my research is much more policy relevant than it would otherwise have been, and I have thus stayed engaged with the policy community. And I have encouraged many of my students to pursue Boren Scholarships or Fellowships themselves. Just my two cents.

27. Even though I did not use the Boren Fellowship to find a job at the State Dept. nor to take advantage of the hiring authority (I took the FS Exam and came in as a regular employee), it was the people I met while overseas who worked for the State Department who convinced me to pursue the Foreign Service. So yes, there is a very strong connection there.
28. I am intensely grateful for the Boren Fellowship. It has dramatically improved my life. All that I have as a professor reflects my experiences in [redacted] during the time the Fellowship supported me there.
29. I am so honored to have been a recipient, even though I didn't go into the foreign service or Federal Government afterwards. Following my study abroad, I lived and worked in [redacted] for 9 years, all in the private sector except for my required service, which was performed at the [redacted]. To be honest, that job was probably the most formative part of the whole Boren experience, since even without the scholarship I would have found a way to get to [redacted]. [Redacted] was an incredible place with incredible staff; I think I got a lot more out of the internship, professionally, than [redacted] got out of me.
30. I still would have pursued my PhD and my goals of becoming a university professor in my field. But the NSEP (at the time) funding was really crucial to my field work. I also had a Fulbright for each country, but the NSEP funding was more flexible - I could not have carried out my research methods without the NSEP funding and could not have stayed in the field long enough to complete the project on the funding provided by Fulbright.
31. I was offered a job as an international program specialist 10 years ago at [redacted] thru the special hiring authority as a Boren fellow. I have had a wonderful and exciting career and have been able to contribute significantly to the work of [redacted] and represent the United States as a proud civil servant. Thanks for the opportunity!
32. I worked for [redacted] for 5 years and started the [redacted] in that time. The program was instrumental to my professional development both as a scholar and as an employee. It shaped my desire to return to graduate



- school to study agriculture. I currently work at redacted with vulnerable communities.
33. Ironically, I was in DC 9/10/01 and 9/11/01 presenting my Boren Fellowship research results at the Boren Fellows Symposium. Before then, but especially because of that direct experience, I knew that I could and should offer my skills in global health, but more importantly in light of the times, as a diplomacy effort for the benefit of our National Security.
  34. My Boren Scholarship experience was formative. My life would not be the same absent it. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities it provided me.
  35. Receiving this fellowship provided the opportunity to build additional skills to make me more competitive as an employee, especially in the Federal Government in foreign affairs. Foreign language skills were the most coveted in the positions I was interested in pursuing. Also, it would be great if the Diplomacy Fellows Program provided assistance for entering USAID's foreign service. I only recall it helping in the application process for State Department's. The fellowship I received was truly an amazing experience and it allowed me to link security and development issues before entering the workforce. I reference these linkages on a regular basis in my Program Officer position with USAID. Thank you for the opportunity- it will always be cherished. (I also met my husband on the fellowship!)
  36. The Boren Scholarship/Fellowship awards program is one of several excellent programs that promote cross-cultural study and professional engagement. While I have not yet had a job in the Federal Government I believe that my willingness to continue to consider one is due to the encouragement I received through the Boren program. Thank you for your support to my work and for all that you do to promote international understanding in our citizenry.
  37. All of my professional success stems from receiving the Boren scholarship. It was the first step. Without it, the next possibilities wouldn't have materialized. The scholarship put me on my current path. I am eternally grateful.
  38. Boren fellowship was important in enabling me to finish my degree; once I started at the State Department, I was in foreign service for 8 years and then converted to civil service to work as a research analyst directly related to my Boren fellowship (Foreign Service sadly did not give me a chance to work on my area of expertise). I went from that civil service position to the White House -- so the knowledge and expertise I initially gained with the Boren fellowship and then expanded on as a civil servant helped me make that jump. So, thank you.

39. Following completion of my Boren scholarship I returned home to America and eventually pursued graduate studies in a health sciences-related field. However, I regularly use the knowledge gained during my Boren-funded study abroad in terms of cross-cultural understanding and professionalism.
40. Having chosen a career in academia, sometimes I worry that Boren might feel their investment was wasted on me. For me, however, receiving a Boren enhanced my awareness of the multitude of ways I, as a global citizen, can contribute to national security through critical analysis and constructive engagement. I hope that Boren values its investment in me as much as I do.
41. I benefited primarily from the funding and opportunity to spend two significant periods of time studying abroad. There would have been virtually no other opportunity to learn the language skills needed for my current position. I certainly would not be where I am now without the Boren Scholarship and Fellowship.
42. It is difficult to speculate how things \*might\* have been different if I had not received the Boren; each experience and success moved me toward further successes, therefore the Boren was essential to all aspects of my path since receiving it.
43. My career is not directly connected to my participation in the Boren Award Program. I am currently actively trying to change my career path to better incorporate the skills achieved from my experience in the Boren program. This program drastically affected who I am as a person, enriched my life, and gave me greater cultural understanding. I am so grateful for the experience.
44. The award changed my life for the better in numerous ways. I am more thankful than words can express. Thank you so very much for this opportunity and for all the positive influences that you have had on my life to this point and will continue to have in the future. Thank you very much. Sincerely, Redacted
45. This scholarship program was the only reason I was able to afford to study abroad, and while I may not have used the language skills learned in my post-scholarship employment, the experiences and life skills learned while studying abroad have influenced every part of my post-scholarship life. I truly appreciate this opportunity.
46. While I had been interested in federal service, the concept of the service agreement set me on the path where Federal service was where I was headed. From there it was just a series of logical steps which led me to my 10 year anniversary working for the Federal government in national security this year.

47. Great program!
48. I am somewhat of a unique case in that I would have pursued my interest in Federal Government employment regardless. However, I think that the Boren program is superb for encouraging students to study critical languages, and then to bring those skills to the USG.
49. Receiving a Boren was a formative experience for me that solidified my interest in international affairs.
50. The Boren Fellowship has helped me through every step of my education and career development. The award allowed me to travel, perform research, and develop international collaborations. The prestige of the award helped me to attain additional funding for my research. Upon graduation, the NSEP helped me to find and apply for positions in the Federal government. The hiring authority allowed a Federal agency to hire me directly. Now, I have my dream job, and am working to make a positive difference in the world.
51. The Boren Scholarship was a terrific program when I used it to go to [redacted] for a year in 2002-2003. It is hard to extrapolate what might have been different if I hadn't received the fellowship, but it was definitely a honor to receive it and it helped me on my way to become a career public servant.
52. The Boren Scholarship/Fellowship is an important source of funding for language training and dissertation research. It was enormously helpful in financing my graduate studies and, as a way to give back. I continue to serve as a reviewer for Boren applications. I also encourage good students of mine to apply.
53. Though not every outcome was what I had hoped for, I truly value the Boren program and the opportunity it provided me. I consider it an essential component of the US government's role in supporting students who can go on to become critical assets in foreign policy in official and also unofficial capacities (including while they are still studying under the program, but also afterwards). I encourage the program to continue and would strongly encourage students to consider language study through the program. I recommend it highly.
54. While the direct benefits of the Boren program, such as language training and overseas travel, provided a substantive advantage over my peers when entering the workforce, the intangible benefits, such as networking and cross-cultural experience, have made the most important impacts in my personal and professional life.

55. As a [redacted], I haven't had much direct use for the language aspect of my study; however, the cultural experience has been extremely valuable. Most of my peers have had very little, if any, contact with foreign cultures besides those of Iraq and Afghanistan. I think my experience in studying abroad has given me a different, and much needed, perspective on certain problem sets.
56. Boren for me was most influential in that I would not have been as persistent as I was in getting a government job if I hadn't needed to fulfill the requirement. I applied for many postings for more than 6 months before finally getting a GS-5 clerical position in my desired agency. Since then I got promoted to Officer, and now senior officer at a high GS-13. I do not believe I would be in the career I am today without Boren, but mostly because it really made me focus on the government for my first job and it made me very persistent. That first job has led to me to where I am today, still in the government and planning to stay for my whole career. I am very appreciative of the Boren Scholarship and the impact it had on my life.
57. Boren gave me the first overseas exposure for a serious internship, at a serious organization, doing serious (not just filing) work. It gave me my first boss who could comment on my policy analysis skills and economic analysis skills. That boss became a major reference, helping me to obtain a later foreign service assignment that is 3 years ahead of my experience-level.
58. I am immensely grateful for my Boren Fellowship; it played a critical role in giving me necessary field experience for my future career path, and in helping me determine my long-term plans and goals. It also shaped me as a person and a professional in myriad ways. Up until now my life circumstances have limited my ability to engage directly in related work through the Federal Government, but I still hope to do this in the future.
59. I would not be on my current career path, or working for my current agency, if I had not received the Boren fellowship. The fellowship was probably the single most important factor in directing my career path (and I am very happy to be on this path). That combined with the funding I received to pursue language study, which was directly relevant to my degree, the Boren fellowship has had a major positive impact on my life.
60. Language proficiency gained while a Boren scholar gave me the bump up needed on State Dept. oral exam to receive an employment offer. Prior to my [redacted], I'd been granted fellowship to study writings of a [redacted] and to study [redacted] dialect. Without the skills Boren gave me, it would have taken me much longer to enter State (if I got in at all). I'm extraordinarily grateful for the opportunities Boren opened up for me.
61. The Boren Fellowship gave me insight into federal opportunities that I had not previously considered. Though I pursued opportunities in the

intelligence field, no offers were extended. Because of my Boren fellowship I would be open to positions within the Federal Government if they arose, and if they were a good fit. I am thankful for the exposure. I continue to steer students towards this program as I think that the benefits and support are worthwhile.

62. The Boren Scholarship completely opened my eyes and re-directed my attention and life goals to Asia. My experience in China led me to select Asia ([redacted]) for my initial officer assignments and further broaden my experience in the region. Though my "service commitment" was already fulfilled, the scholarship was also the reason the [redacted] selected me to serve in the US Consulate in [redacted]. It also helped my application to a prestigious business program and my Asian cultural and language experience are factors for getting hired to a prestigious finance role with a major US bank this month.
63. The Boren scholarship put government service on my radar, and that of my siblings, in a way which it just wasn't prior to having the opportunity. After my time in one of the industries at which one can fulfill one's obligations, I decided that while it had its attractions, it wasn't the right fit for the rest of my career. I pivoted to a different field which allowed me to work on US-[redacted] relations, and then into the private sector in [redacted]. Although I'm no longer working directly in a national security related field, I'd like to think that the Boren award was ultimately to the benefit of both countries. It certainly exposed me to opportunities that I likely would not have received absent the award, due to my family's inability to finance international travel and national service not being on my radar prior. I would note that [redacted] was exposed to the Boren program through my award, applied for and received it in his own right, and he has recently continued his service to the nation by becoming a Foreign Service Officer assigned to a country which is intimately connected to the language/region which he received the Boren award for.
64. The Boren Scholarship was a fantastic opportunity to increase my language proficiency and international experience and comfort. This, although not directly used in my employment, was important in that it increased my level of maturity and understanding of the world and people. This has contributed to making me a more successful person, both personally and professionally. Due to the fact that I had resolved to join the [redacted] prior to applying for the Boren scholarship, it did not impact my post-graduation employment decisions.
65. Without the Boren Scholarship and the attached service requirement, I would not have looked for a job in the Federal Government, not been contacted by my current employer (which fulfilled my service requirement), or found myself working in support of national security for 8 years now,

- and probably staying much longer. I also would not have made language study the focus of my study abroad experience. I didn't know this at the time I applied for and accepted the award, but it would become one of the most influential decisions defining my career path.
66. You should include questions related to those of us who pursued careers in higher education--it is difficult to apply these questions to my work as a university instructor and academic program associate director, which I achieved wholly outside of the NSEP support structure--though I highly value the experiences I had through my Boren fellowship, and it definitely helped me along my professional path. Thank you!
67. I didn't know about the special hiring authority when I applied for the Boren, but that turned out to be the most valuable part of the award. I would not have been able to get a job in Federal government without it, given the difficult (read: impossible) USAJobs hiring process. I may have found other ways to study abroad without the Boren, but I likely would not have been able to find work with the Federal government without that authority.
68. I loved the actual work I did with the government. I would have stayed in a government career if I had risked being randomly moved to another topic or being asked to relocate.
69. I was extremely grateful for the opportunity and had a marvelous experience. This is a fantastic program.
70. I was the first from my university redacted to receive a Boren Scholarship, and I strongly believe it strengthened my candidacy for the Foreign Service. I took the exam right after I completed my scholarship year and entered straight out of my BA. I did not attend a very prestigious university, so I think the prestige of the scholarship really helped me get to the next level professionally. I just celebrated my five year anniversary in the Foreign Service and hope to stay here my whole career. I spent my first tour working as a press officer in [redacted], and I think the regional knowledge I developed during my scholarship helped me secure a great first posting. I'm currently in [redacted] and will be heading back to DC to work for the [redacted] this summer. I don't think any of this would have been possible without my scholarship and I am extremely grateful. Please keep the program available for students not coming out of the top universities - it makes a huge difference in our lives. Thank you and feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need any further assistance.
71. I'm deeply grateful for the opportunities that the Boren Fellowship provided me. I ended up pursuing a career in higher education rather than the government for a number of reasons (back when this was an option for the service requirement), and the Boren Fellowship gave me regional expertise and first-hand experience I otherwise would have lacked. Many of my

- undergraduate students plan to pursue careers in the military or government, and my experience abroad and the deeper knowledge of government agencies and offices that I gained through attendance at the conference for fellowship recipients after my return help me better prepare them for these careers.
72. My resume was seen by my employer - they called me and asked me to interview - it was an interesting job and a good pay grade and I have been very happy.
73. Such a valuable resource for me. I used my Boren fellowship to collect data for my dissertation in China. Could not have completed my dissertation without this funding. Thank you!
74. The Boren Award laid the foundation for future opportunities, meaning that perhaps it was not the very next employment position that furthered my career path, but the one after that and after that. Each subsequent opportunity brought additional benefits and clarity, but the root could be traced, at least in part, to the Boren Award.
75. The Boren fellowship is directly responsible for my post-Boren career. While conducting my Boren research in [redacted] I connected with my current employer, who then gave me the rare opportunity to live and work in [redacted]. That post-Boren job in turn was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity which put me on a successful career track in international development. The Boren was a huge benefit to me, and I believe that I become just the sort of international security professional that the Boren seeks to cultivate. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity.
76. The Boren has been useful to me in terms of lending credibility to my expertise; it has been an important component of my resume and professional profile

## Negative

77. I wish there had been more clear communication of how to use the Boren scholarship as a stepping stone to enter the Foreign Service. Also, if some of the time and timing requirements related to entering the Foreign Service via a special opportunity as a Boren scholar had been a little more flexible, I would likely be happily serving in the Foreign Service now.
78. I really tried hard to secure a position in the government that matched my interests and skills. I sent out inquiry letters and applied for many positions, even internships. I never received a single offer. I was able to fulfill the requirement because of my teaching and studies in graduate school.

79. I was very eager to work in some capacity in the Federal Government before and after the Boren award. I applied for dozens of government jobs at that time there was very little to show for it, and the hiring authority seemed pretty irrelevant.
80. Security is not just about military - originally fellows could make a strong case for why IR or development meant as much for our national security as military and intelligence gathering. I usually don't mention Boren now because you have shifted requirements to Dept. of Defense - might want to get a bit smarter about this.
81. The service requirement became much more restrictive after I received the award. If the current service requirement limitations were in place at the time that I applied for the fellowship then I would never have applied or done it in the first place. It was a better designed program before.
82. I think there are a lot of resources that I didn't know about or how to access, and I'm not really sure how to get around that, how I could have accessed some of that information in a meaningful way. I also feel like the only time Boren reaches out to me is when I need to do something for Boren. I don't get program emails or newsletters or anything like that, but I get plenty of "take the survey" emails. I'm usually happy to help with surveys like this, because I know how important and challenging they are, but I don't feel that there's much post Boren support (I don't mean financial support, either). I've also chosen to go into a field that is not related to my Boren fellowship. I'm currently in a PhD program abroad, studying. This seems like something that Boren would be interested in, but as far as I can tell there are absolutely no resources or support available from Boren, whether in the form of networking, information/program access, or any potential financial support. My university alumni networks and the [redacted] networks offer more support and engagement. I would love to continue my connection as a Boren alum, but my sense is very clearly that Boren has no interest in alumni engagement. That is, until it's survey time.
83. No one recognizes the Boren Scholarship/Fellowship. It was very difficult to fulfill my service requirement because no one in the Federal Government would hire me.
84. I hear of very few people actually landing government work due to their post-Boren status.
85. I was really frustrated with my experience trying to fulfill my service requirement when I first graduated from undergrad. The first position for which I interviewed, informed me that my travels and connections abroad would prevent me from being hired for an entry level position because the



background check would be too expensive. So I started a different career path (teaching) and became disenchanted by the fed govt. After years for teaching (and a MA) the service requirement weighed heavily on me and I finally was able to fulfill my service requirement but by then I had moved on with my life and the earlier frustrations with trying to get a job that would utilize my [redacted] skills blocked me from wanted to pursue that career path.

86. I was unaware of a great majority of the networking, job assistance, and State Department Diplomacy fellows resources available to Boren scholars.
87. The thing I'm most disappointed about is that the events have never been very personable. I've attended a few but there was nobody facilitating the fellows to mingle. I showed up at a particular event at a local restaurant. Individuals stood around with people they knew. There was no mingling. I left because the fellows were just not very comfortable with each other. Secondly, I tuckered out asking for any assistance in locating a position in one of the government agencies under DoD or any other agency for that matter. I get the strong impression that my skills nor the fact that I completed such a successful project for my country of study is useful to any of the agencies I applied to or given any support by NSEP. I'm disappointed in that.
88. The special hiring privileges did not make any difference in my ability to find employment after graduation.
89. Better help in placing people in government positions
90. Job listings and the Boren Website could definitely be easier to use.
91. The way the program is now configured, I would likely not pursue the award with the more limited definition of national security employment. Some of the questions are biased, but while I answered as accurately as I could, I do not believe that Boren provided much in the way of support after completing the award. I understand this situation has changed, but at the time it really was every man for himself.
92. There is a need to educate senior leaders in the DoD on the value of NSEP and Boren and Schedule A and conditional to permanent transition with the servicing Civ Personnel teams.
93. I barely remember my Boren and never felt integrated into a Boren community. It would be helpful to have a much more vibrant alumni network.

## Both

94. Boren is a good program with right intentions. Getting people in the door at agencies continues to be an issue. Would recommend considering cutting quantity of awards and using funds to put people on stipends at agencies where the fellows would not count against billets. Advancing security clearance would also help.
95. Although my study abroad experience through NSEP/Boren Scholarship was the defining experience of my academic career, it has had virtually zero impact on my professional life and career path. After graduation, I was interested in pursuing a career in Federal Service, but after waiting for over 9 months and still not getting any response to job applications, I took a position in a for-profit organization and have remained with the organization. I did take some personal leave to fulfill my NSEP service requirement through work with an institution of higher education. My perception is that there is additional support now with job placement so that the application/placement process would be less than a year, but in 2000, that support was just not available to me. I think there is a strong likelihood that I would have dedicated my career to Federal Service had the application and placement process been more streamlined.
96. I consider my government employment experience to be the worst employment experience that I have ever had. I am happily engaged in the pursuit of becoming a family physician and biotechnology entrepreneur. My language studies were fun and fulfilling, but they are completely unmarketable skills in isolation. While I am grateful for the experience that I had, my NSEP scholarship and study abroad experience have no connection at all to my chosen career path. I cannot stress enough that working in the national security sector was a miserable experience & I am grateful every day that it is over!
97. I greatly personally benefited from the international experience. However, as my award was for only a 6 week program, I did not achieve language proficiency. Therefore, it did not influence my career path, and I entered an unrelated field. In this situation, it was very difficult to find a position that would accept me. Early on after completion of the program, I applied to multiple jobs without success. Thankfully my eventual path led me to the VA where my service did satisfy my service requirement.
98. It would have been very useful to have more post-scholarship support in finding a compatible job. I realize I started this program in the early/development period of the program, but I really could have used more help in finding a job which utilized my language proficiency. You want an American to learn this language, you train an American to be fluent in this

language... there should be no difficulty in having a job available for the successful student of this language. More career support in finding a job would have been beneficial to both myself and the success of the program's objectives.

99. I appreciate the opportunity that the Boren Fellowship gave me in studying abroad. I had planned to work for the Federal government. However, at the time I was looking the Boren Fellowship was not well recognized and did not seem to assist in the types of Federal jobs I was looking for. However, I ended up selecting a job at a university primarily for the location.
100. I finished my program in December of 2001. Considering that 9/11 had just happened and we were in a recession, jobs were scarce and having a Boren didn't mean a whole lot to Federal hiring agencies, or at least none of the ones I applied to. I eventually joined the [redacted] as an Intelligence Specialist to cover my service requirement and gain additional experience. Looking back, I would say that at the time, the Boren didn't open a lot of employment opportunities for me (maybe things are different now), however, having studied abroad in [redacted] set the course for the rest of my life so it was an amazing, formative experience. I still had to take out loans to cover the cost of tuition + study abroad, but the Boren significantly helped in that regard. I'm doing a PhD at [redacted], so it all worked out in the end. Hope a good program keeps getting better!
101. I felt the Boren gave me great opportunities to study an important language and gain valuable experience abroad. It also put me in contact with a good number of helpful government officials and exposed me to very interesting and great people I am still friends with today. The real down side that I experienced came after receiving the award and trying to locate a permanent position with the US government. Given the government's hiring processes the fact that I had the award did not seem to make much of a difference. People liked it and thought it was good generally but I did not have the experience that it made a tremendous impact. The language skills were fantastic and transferable; however the reality was that the Boren was just the first step in a long process to fluency. I attended language school for an additional two and a half years in a foreign country to gain fluency. This was the most critical aspect I believe in terms of my future job prospects. I attended a small number of recruiting sessions put on by Boren and I did not find them to be very helpful. They were interesting to hear people speak about different USG positions but they were not particularly helpful in finding a job. I would sit there and wait in line to speak to someone but then was ultimately directed to the website or [usajobs.gov](http://usajobs.gov) and told to apply through the portal. This is the process USG uses and I understand that, my main point is that these info sessions primarily just told me nothing new that I couldn't find online, where I ultimately had to go anyways, so it felt like a bit ineffective. Overall I would

say the Boren was packaged as this wonderful gateway to government jobs and interesting experiences. While it was a wonderful experience and influenced my decision to continue studying a critical language, I did not feel that it turned out to be a substantial advantage when looking for USG jobs.

102. I think a post-award orientation with recruiters would have been helpful. Also, if a person pursues graduate school it would be helpful if the service requirement be postponed until after graduation. I would have appreciated having the hiring exemption now much more than I did when I finished the NSEP award directly out of undergrad.
103. I found it exceedingly difficult to get good federal jobs. The Boren fellowship was truly a blessing, as it allowed me to pursue my dream of getting a PhD in foreign area studies from [redacted]. USAJOBS is a black hole, so if Boren really wants people to get into federal service, creating opportunities for opening those doors would be important.
104. I value the experience that I gained from participating in the Boren Fellowship program. I learned several new languages and was exposed to countries in Africa and Asia that I would not have visited or lived in had I not received the fellowship. For me, the weakest part of the Fellowship experience was assistance with job placement. I fulfilled my service requirement by working at an educational institution.
105. This is an excellent program. It could use some better public relations and higher profile within academia (the feeder for new scholars and fellows). It should be seen as being as prestigious as Fulbright, etc.
106. Receiving a Boren Scholarship was wonderful and transformative experience as an undergraduate, and it enabled me to improve my language proficiency significantly. However, receiving the scholarship did not translate into additional job options (e.g., via USA Jobs), and I ultimately met my service requirements through graduate study and teaching before taking a position in an intergovernmental organization.
107. When I finished my Boren fellowship, I was disappointed that there really were no jobs in government for my skills, considering that my spoken Mandarin was excellent. Fortunately higher education could use me and I have been teaching ever since.
108. I loved the Boren program. However upon returning I found it all-but impossible to secure a job in the field I studied, namely Mandarin. I have since transitioned into entrepreneurship which has no relevance to what I studied. However my experience abroad changed my life for the better and I am thrilled to be an NSEP/Boren scholar.

109. I studied abroad for a year in China with Boren support. Because of the NSEP focus on national security, I structured my study abroad proposal to focus on [redacted] issues, beginning with a term in [redacted], followed by a term in [redacted]. Although I didn't think much of it at the time, this sequencing meant that I arrived in [redacted] able to compare directly and positively with what I had just experienced in [redacted], and I became very interested in [redacted] politics as a result. My dissertation research grew out of this experience and interest in [redacted], and I got my current academic position due to my background in the study of Taiwanese politics. Had I not been seeking NSEP support, I probably never would have gone to [redacted] in the first place, and I probably would not have been able to spend more than a term in the [redacted], either. Thus, the Boren program played a critical role in setting me on my current career path. Also, a few words about my experience with the service requirement. I fulfilled this by enrolling in a doctorate program in political science, with a focus on [redacted] politics. By the time I graduated from college, I had already been admitted to this Ph.D. program, so I was no longer interested in seeking immediate government employment, and I made no use of the Boren Forum or other NSEP job-hunting resources once I began graduate study. I do, however, remember being frustrated at how few positions I was even remotely qualified for as a mere college graduate; my decision to apply for graduate school was motivated in part by my fruitless experience looking for positions that would fulfill my NSEP service requirement right out of college.
110. The Boren Scholarship/Fellowship assisted me in completing my research abroad as part of my doctoral studies. It did not help me land a position or has helped me in my career path.
111. The fellowship was a great opportunity at the time. However, it has not helped to get a position with the Federal Government, in the area of international affairs, the Foreign Service, or similar, which I would have enjoyed doing.
112. This was a great opportunity and I really appreciate the investment made in my career and future. My experience as a Boren Fellow has greatly influenced my career choices and my capacity to excel in my chosen field. All that said, I think Boren should stick to putting people out there and offering these wonderful opportunities. I've found my interactions on the post-return side of things to be mostly clumsy and inefficient and sometimes ill-willed and agenda driven, as I mentioned with my initial job search. Still, thank you so much for your overall support. I truly am grateful for this experience.
113. When I was pursuing federal employment assistance via the Boren office was limited. I know that now the program had developed substantially,

however there is still a lot of work to be done informing agencies about the program and the special hiring authority it confers. I have yet to meet a federal employee who knew what the Boren program was.

114. I was already studying abroad when I received my Boren Scholarship. I applied 4 years in a row before I received it. I would not have been able to finish my studies abroad had I not received the award. Even with all my education and experience abroad, getting a job with the government was very difficult. It took me an entire year after graduation of actively searching before I finally got hired with DoD. During this time I applied for numerous jobs listed on the NSEP website and attended multiple virtual career fairs. It seemed that the holdup was with HR; I could not seem to get past them and get my resume to the hiring managers. My "special hiring authority" did not seem to help, especially when applying on USAjobs. I got my current job with DoD because HR made a mistake and invited me to a "meet-and-greet". After I was invited HR called and asked if I was a minority or if I had a disability. I said no. HR told me that my "special hiring authority" was not so special and that there are various types of "Schedule A" and my Boren Schedule A does not qualify for the "meet-and-greet". I argued with HR over this and they relented and let me attend the hiring event. At the "meet-and-greet" I was finally able to meet with the hiring managers. I was booked throughout the entire day with hiring managers that wanted to interview me. At the end I received numerous job offers for various programs, and I accepted one of them. At the same time I received a job offer from a major defense contractor, but my service agreement is one of the reasons I took my current job. Although I do not use many of the skills I acquired abroad at my current job, I am working on finding a position within DoD where I can utilize all of my skill sets.
115. I'm still interested in federal jobs but am no longer receiving job leads from NSEP. Perhaps the tie is broken now since I fulfilled the service requirement.
116. My Boren Fellowship was extremely valuable to me because it funded a year of language study in China, during which I gained professional proficiency in Mandarin Chinese. NSEP assistance during the job search, however, was not useful at all. I applied to jobs at a wide range of government agencies and received no response. Almost no hiring managers were familiar with the Boren program, knew about the hiring preference granted by the program, or seemed to care even if they were familiar with this. I found my current position, and the position that fulfilled my service requirement, using my university's career services website. It was the only job offer, and indeed the only interview, that I received after more than six months of searching for jobs after returning from my Boren Fellowship. In conclusion, the opportunity to travel and become proficient in a critical language was

very beneficial to my career, but no other aspect of the program or assistance from NSEP helped my job search whatsoever.

117. [Redacted] was a jerk. I probably would have consulted the NSEP office a lot more during my job search if I had not had such a bad experience with him. In fact, now that he is gone, I may consult NSEP in my job searches in the future. Very thankful to have gotten the Boren funding. Not in an "international" position now, but my agency does have opportunities overseas and I will be applying for these opportunities in the future.
118. I think the hiring authority is HUGE and to be honest, turned out to be far more important to me and my future plans than the scholarship money. I think the decision a few years ago to not have that special status be indefinite was a poor choice; essentially the effects of recent changes have incentivized people to get a Boren, do the minimum service requirement, and then leave government!?!?!?! That's offensive to me on so many levels--I wanted to work for the U.S. government before I received that award and the Boren just gave me the hiring status to make that a reality and additional skills to make me better at it (language, cultural exposure, etc.) once I started that path. I have seen several Boren fellows who started at my agency, performed well and received awards and recognition, but had to struggle over multiple years to convert to a regular FTE. After the change to automatic conversion, I have still seen people struggle to find a billet. When I moved to DC in 2006, the NSEP office had a strong staff and when those two ladies left ([redacted]), their replacements were not nearly as good. I haven't been as impressed with the staff since (though in all fairness, I interact with them less now). I met recent Boren Fellows (more recent than me) and haven't heard about them getting the same level of support in finding a job, navigating use of their special hiring status, and joining the government that I was fortunate enough to receive when I tried to start completing my service requirement. All in all, I've become very disappointed in the program in the last few years. I think it's a great concept that in practice has become flailing.
119. The Boren Fellowship was a springboard to get me physically to the area of the world where I wanted to work and to develop my language skills; however, I didn't find the Boren support services very useful in helping to place me in a federal position. Although I reached out extensively to Boren for assistance, a negligible amount of help was provided that I could have gotten from a guidance counselor. As such, I sought out opportunities on my own to fulfill my service requirement but these opportunities were low paying, low level, and dead-end positions. I remember Boren talking a lot about how great the "special hiring authority" provision was for Boren fellows but no federal agency I applied for seemed to know what it was or care. Also, among federal agencies, there's little or no recognition of what a Boren Fellow is. I would have loved to work in the Federal sector after



completing my Boren award but found it difficult to gain entry through USA Jobs, etc... so I found work in the nonprofit sector on programs funded by Federal Government. I am now struggling financially due to low pay of nonprofits and really worried about my career prospects.

120. The NSEP staff have done a fantastic job increasing awareness in non-IC government agencies since completing my fellowship. I had an extremely difficult time seeking a federal position to fulfill my service requirement although I did complete a three-month in-country internship during my fellowship funded study. The toughest part was that most federal employers would not even consider interviewing me based on the fact that I was not already in the Federal Government. When presenting information about the Schedule A hiring exemption, it sounded good in theory, but it was difficult to get the necessary follow through with their HR. Over the years, I've heard about and seen increased awareness about the Boren programs 'on the other side' when I was working for a Federal Government agency. I did my part to serve on the [redacted] and in other capacities to mentor and place other Boren alumni, and successfully did so for several individuals who are still at the State Department. I just wish that I had this level of mentorship and support when it was my time to fulfill my service requirement as it took 2-3 years of all sorts of rejection from federal employers to get there.
121. When looking to fulfill my service requirement most of the job openings and Boren community members seemed to be more in the areas of public policy with very few specific openings or members in the sciences or technical fields, where I could use my science degree. Therefore I didn't find much value in what the program offered in that sense. That said, my time abroad has been hugely valuable in building language skills and international awareness that are critical for being part of the very international scientific community.

## 2005-2012

### Positive

122. A fantastic program. Greater advertising in relevant graduate programs around the country (not just DC) would be great.
123. Boren is an outstanding program and I recommend it to everyone who is looking to gain language and other professional development opportunities. I am not sure if I would have been able to stay in China for a year without Boren. That year was one of discovery and extremely fulfilling



personally and academically. Thank you so much for the opportunity to have that experience and share it with others.

124. I continue to value my experience participating in the Boren Scholarship and the effects it had in my personal and professional development. I sincerely appreciate opportunity to have had a true immersion experience for a period of time long enough to develop meaningful connections with the people I met and to really understand the host country culture (as well as my own). I have continued to develop my language skills and engage with immigrant populations from the country I served in here in the U.S., and recently finished a Master that builds on these experiences and those I gained fulfilling my service requirement. Thank you so much! This was invaluable and I hope the program continues to support U.S. students in learning abroad long into the future.
125. I was very thankful for USG support of my critical language study abroad. I had wanted to work for the Intel Community prior to finding the scholarship so the service requirement was fine with me. It's difficult for me to know if the Boren Scholarship had anything to do with me getting my post-degree employment. I also have a difficult time responding to how the Boren Scholarship influenced my awareness of "my position as a global citizen." More than being a "global citizen," it broadened my perspectives and deepened my understanding of international policy issues.
126. It was formative to my understanding of inter-state relations and the importance of cultural competency in doing any work internationally. Very grateful to have had the opportunity.
127. The NSEP Scholarships are gaining in prestige throughout the U.S. government and associated organizations, and I hope the NSEP team will continue to seek out the best and brightest now and well into the future. I worry any deviation in the quality or number of awardees will negatively impact the work done by the NSEP office and NSEP alumni over the last two decades.
128. The program was a life-changing experience that set me on a path to pursue further language study in [redacted]. It broadened my world perspective and set me on a course to accept intelligence agency rotational assignments overseas and to pursue more ambitious goals than I would have otherwise attempted.
129. This is an AMAZING program, and participation in it has definitely been one of the highlights of my life. Although I have steered slightly away from East Asian affairs, I would not be who I am today without Boren. I cannot recommend this program to people enough. I hope it continues to grow.

130. Excellent program - keep it funded!
131. Getting the Boren scholarship opened a lot of doors. The [redacted] is notoriously difficult to get into-I feel that having that on my resume really helped me get an interview. It also helped me finally be hired by an office within the [redacted] that was interested in my regional study. I would not have studied overseas for as long as I did without Boren support, and therefore wouldn't have gotten as fluent in Chinese as I did. Thanks for the support! I really believe Boren was a springboard to where I am now.
132. I imagine that I would have pursued a similar career path if I had not received the scholarship. However, the scholarship allowed me to have a deeper study abroad experience than the one I would have pursued without the funding support. In doing so, it gave me valuable region-specific knowledge, which has been a tremendous asset in my current career.
133. My Boren Fellowship provided an amazing experience to study abroad in Russia, which I would have not been able to undertake otherwise. That overseas experience has been directly applicable to my professional work since graduation, even when I moved away from Russia as an analytical area of focus.
134. Thank you all for taking the time out to make the Boren program the best it can be!
135. The language component made a noticeable difference in my Mandarin proficiency and helped assure me a place in the Foreign Service due to the critical needs language (CNL) bonus applied to my registrar score. Being able to go straight to the oral assessment was also incredibly helpful (Diplomacy Fellows program).
136. This is a good program. It allowed me to complete my studies with fieldwork which other students could not do. I studied both [redacted] and [redacted] in [redacted] and [redacted]. But my real interest was in the fieldwork as I was already advanced in [redacted] and [redacted] before the Boren.
137. Academically and personally, the Boren Fellowship has been one of the most seminal moments of my graduate school experience. I was grateful for the experience, and privileged for the opportunity to serve my country. Thank you!
138. Although I might have ended up in the Foreign Service without my Boren experience, I definitely have my Boren Fellowship to thank for the fact that I was able to join so quickly after finishing my graduate studies. The Diplomacy Fellows Program allowed me to skip straight to the oral

assessment part of the Foreign Service exam, which I was able to pass. However, my score was quite low, so the only reason I was made an offer to join was because I was able to use the advanced language skills I acquired through my Boren Fellowship in Russia to boost my score. I doubt I would be where I am today if not for my Boren Fellowship.

139. Awesome staff was integral in helping me gain a Federal Government position and cultivate broad professional experience in international affairs. This program has a uniquely meaningful mission--underscored by its government service requirement. It truly nurtured and supported my personal, academic, and professional interest in foreign policy, in particular defense policy. The NSEP fellowship was perhaps the most important stepping stone into a meaningful (and high leveled) professional career in foreign policy and now a new academic career in [redacted] studies. While I had always been committed to a career in international affairs (even before my NSEP experience), my NSEP experience (language and regional expertise, professional network, fellowship prestige) was absolutely fundamental in helping me realize my dream of becoming a public servant.
140. Getting hired in the Federal Government is HARD. After having seen how hiring works in the office where I fulfilled my service requirement, I feel certain I never would have been hired without Boren giving me a "backdoor" route in. I would have been happy to stay at DOS for a large part, if not my whole career, if I hadn't chosen to leave for law school.
141. Great program. I am a member of the Foreign Service, which could benefit from having more and more Boren Alumni join!
142. I am grateful for the Diplomacy Fellows program, in that it allowed me to skip directly to the Foreign Service oral exam and bypass the hit-or-miss "PNQ" step of the application process. I am happy to be using my language skills and foreign-country knowledge in this great career serving our nation. Thanks again for this wonderful opportunity.
143. It is a critical national security program that is not only changing students' lives, but is helping rejuvenate interest in public service. It is a strategic asset in the government's human capital bureaucracy.
144. My answers in this section are meant to express that without the exclusive job announcement distributed to me by NSEP, there is little chance I would have ended up at my employing agency, as I knew exceedingly little about it at the time.
145. My Boren experience was arguably the most significant event leading to my career in the Federal Government. I use my language skills regularly in my daily responsibilities and have certainly been a greater asset to my

employer because of them. I believe I am a model example of what the Boren program, and the NSEP in particular, was established to achieve.

146. The Boren Award allowed me to study abroad in China for one year, whereas without it, I probably would have only had the resources to study for one semester. It opened up a new world for me, and helped me gain confidence that I could successfully learn a hard language, live and thrive in a very different place, and one day become a Foreign Service Officer. I think that if I hadn't gotten the Boren Award, odds are that I would not have been given the opportunity to become a Foreign Service Officer. I am very grateful, and always recommend that college-age students interested in studying abroad should consider applying for a Boren Award.
147. The Boren Fellowship is extremely important for the United States government's recruitment of America's best academic talent to work in federal service. I am indebted to the Boren Fellowship for offering the opportunity to work in federal service, and I hope to provide additional opportunities for Boren Fellows to work in my area in the future. I believe that the Boren Fellowship greatly enhances the United States' long-term national security.
148. The Boren Fellowship's exemptive hiring authority was particularly helpful in allowing the State Department to hire and accelerating the time frame within which my hiring occurred
149. The language skills I acquired through my studies under the Boren Scholarship were absolutely the most critical distinguishing feature of my resume when applying for jobs in my chosen career field of international development. Without these language skills, I would not have been as competitive a candidate.
150. Being a recipient of the Boren Fellowship has been rewarding in so many ways. I am so grateful to have been granted funding to travel to [redacted] in [redacted] to study the language for six months because it enabled me to learn a difficult language in the country of its origin and I didn't have the stress of worrying about the money that I would have spent out of my own pocket to travel and live overseas for six months. It was a great experience getting to enjoy the local culture and people. However, equally as important I feel the Boren Fellowship gave me a real edge when I began applying for federal jobs. I feel very fortunate to have had a seamless transition from school to federal employment. I met a recruiter for my current employer at a Boren Fellowship Career Fair and handed him my resume, from there my security clearance and eventual conditional offer, took all of about 3-4 months. I credit the speediness of my job attainment to the Boren Fellowship because it helped me stand out from the crowd. I am even more grateful after hearing the many horror stories of long

months awaiting word for federal employment that I have heard from my colleagues. The Boren Fellowship really eased the financial strain of graduate school and the stress of finding a job. Thank you!

151. I liked the flexibility that the Boren Fellowship gave me to pursue the fellowship that I wanted. It definitely helped me in gaining cross-cultural skills in the workplace that I probably would not have developed otherwise. I also benefited enormously from the Diplomacy Fellows Program, which put me in the career I am currently in. I am not sure how long I will stay, but the Boren Fellowship most definitely helped me get here.
152. I think the Boren Awards program is outstanding and is one of the USG's best initiatives in years - on par with the Fulbright program, PMF, etc. It is an excellent use of resources to assist people in studying difficult languages. Thanks to my Boren Fellowship I achieved a "superior" rating for my [redacted] language ability and entered the Foreign Service with a 3+/3 level (no additional training was required). While I think the Boren Awards program still trails the PMF program in their ability to place people in relevant USG jobs, it makes us outstanding candidates.
153. The fact that Boren recipients statistics favor a longer study proposal was the impetus for me even considering two semesters abroad, which I am very grateful for.
154. The opportunities during and after receipt of the Boren Fellowship have played a profoundly important role in directing my career path. I am excited by the opportunities that I have received as a result of this experience, and find myself frequently telling others about the positive experiences I had during my Boren fellowship tenure. I am extremely thankful for this opportunity and hope to be able to give back some day to help maintain high quality of the Boren program.
155. This was my most significant professional development experience. I definitely would not have gotten into the foreign service without it.
156. While the Boren Fellowship did not influence my application or acceptance into the Foreign Service (I began the application process before receiving the Boren Fellowship), I have used the skills I developed as a Boren Fellow during my FS career. Particularly pertinent, I did my Boren studies in [redacted] and I'm currently serving in [redacted]. The connections I made as a Boren Fellow in [redacted] have positively affected my tour here.
157. Boren enabled me to achieve my professional goals - thank you for the fellowship and I hope the program continues to support students learning critical needs languages.

158. I cannot state enough how grateful I am to have been a Boren Scholar. It changed my life for the better and it will be a gift to every new scholar and fellow in the future, whether they know it at the time or not.
159. I gained an incredible amount of life experience and developed an array of professional skills in a relatively short time as a Boren Fellow. I took my time abroad very seriously and enjoyed it to the fullest. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have served both as a fellow and as a federal contractor as a result of the award, and consider it an honorable privilege! I recognize a very healthy and productive path between the Boren awards and joining the State Department, despite having not chosen that path. Thanks very much for your support of the NSEP fellows network.
160. The most important piece of the Boren Fellowship was that it provided an avenue into the Department of State civil service, which is a fairly difficult service to get into.
161. Amazing, life-changing opportunity that made me proficient in a critical needs language and opened the doors to the Federal Government!
162. I found my current position (the one that fulfilled my service requirement) through my own networking, but the experience gained through the Boren and especially the hiring authority were what enabled me to actually get the job.
163. Most jobs in the U.S. want people who can speak and write clearly in English. My experience was that language skills were never the primary deciding factor for a hiring decision, though they might be secondary. The Boren undeniably shaped my career though and I'm very grateful.
164. My Boren Fellowship was less than 3 month support and followed my Fulbright Fellowship in a different country but same region. As such, it was not as instrumental in my career path as in others, but it did provide additional opportunities that greatly supplanted my experiences abroad. In a survey, it is very difficult to capture the nuances of those additional experiences on my career, but the Boren Fellowship did have an impact.
165. My Boren-funded scholarship did not influence my career path as much as it influenced me as a person and a global citizen. That semester profoundly changed my point-of-view about the world and U.S. foreign policy. Part of that was because I was in [redacted], a majority Muslim country, when 9/11 occurred. I learned so much about Islam and colonial history, and this history of Islam as political resistance to Western influence that I returned to the US with a very different understanding of world events. I may not be teaching directly about foreign policy (I'm getting a PHD in [redacted]), but

it indirectly influences the examples I use in class, and what I want my students to learn. I am very grateful to have had this experience.

## Negative

166. Boren Scholarship was and continues to be for me, a complete waste of time. Only position I was permitted (said [redacted] in 2006--2007) to take was at DoD -Capstone, a position which had promised me a Sec. Clear. but which was never honored. Never were language skills used, nor intel skills either. Was a waste, complete and utter disaster. I finally left when they showed me a job description which included cleaning tables!@!!After which I left....
167. I think the Boren needs to be a lot better about networking with federal positions, especially as people get advanced degrees. It is very hard to break into the Federal Government and without a much stronger network people will be unable to fulfill their requirements.
168. I was very frustrated that I had a service requirement under the Boren Award and felt like I received absolutely no preferential hiring treatment or assistance in my job search process. I applied for MANY government jobs, citing my Boren Award and I was not able to obtain a government position. I did, however, obtain a position with a non-profit that fulfilled my requirement, but this was not at all due to the Boren Award. Overall, I was really frustrated with the lack of support that the Boren Award offered in terms of active job search support (at the time I graduated, the job list serve was very paltry) and felt like I was stuck with a requirement when employers did not seem to take note or preference of a Boren Scholar at all.
169. I wish I had been given more guidance in how to get a job in the govt. based on my qualifications. There was a Schedule in place at the time to give us priority, but it wasn't clear how to initiate contact with agencies and ask about using it.
170. The Boren has had limited value in seeking federal employment during a period of sequestration, particularly when compared to other hiring preference programs (e.g. veterans) and experience. When there are simply very few job announcements at the GS7-GS9 levels, the Boren does not confer significant advantages.
171. The formal benefits of the Boren scholarship in terms of job placement seemed to be much lacking compared to the PMF program.
172. I was surprised that I never had the opportunity (or requirement) of testing my language proficiency after completing my overseas tour. Indeed, it

would have been useful to me, after spending eleven months studying [redacted] intensively overseas, to have had some objective measure of the degree of proficiency that I had gained. For example, a certification of my level of proficiency from the Dept. of State language school would have been useful. But as far as I remember, upon my return, the Boren program never even checked up on me to see how my overseas study had gone. I was left with the impression that no one really knew or cared what I had been up to.

173. After a considerable amount of time working within the IC I have to ask. Why does the Boren program exist? If the IC has no interest in placing professionals with advanced language capabilities into positions where they will utilize their language skills, then the program is merely a political device to help students complete study abroad. Not a bad thing, just a misrepresentation.
174. At the time I received and completed the Boren Fellowship there was no support for Fellows returning and seeking employment to fulfill their service requirement. I was told to look on USAJOBS and apply via that vehicle. I became desperate for a job and reached out to existing contacts at the Department of State for a position. The position I received did not require me to use any of the skills or knowledge I acquired through the Fellowship or my graduate program. This was very disappointing. It would be helpful if the Boren Program could facilitate networking and employment opportunities for returning Fellows (much like the structure that exists for PMFs). That way Fellows would have access to pertinent offices and bureaus and those offices and bureaus would know that the Fellows come with specialized skills and knowledge as well as support from the program.
175. From my perspective, the program is spread too wide and has too little focus on getting individuals into National Security positions. If the agency that supports Boren scholars and fellows focused on specific positions, rather than taking whatever they can from where ever they can get it, the utility and effectiveness of the program to support national security would increase. For example, my [redacted] had the Boren scholarship in the [redacted] and did zero in the field of national security (Diplomatic/Defense/Economic) and even less in the language she was given the award to study.
176. Boren had zero name recognition within the Federal Government, provided no help in obtaining high quality analyst jobs at DOD or intelligence agencies and the jobs offered exclusively to Boren fellows were not the types that should have been available to people who had received so-called "elite" fellowships. There were several instances in which high level officials at DIA and CIA wanted to bring me into their offices because they



knew about my hiring exemption, but the process ended up leaving me ineligible or too complicated to get through the bureaucracy. I was itching for a great job in intel to put my training in Chinese politics and Mandarin to use, but Boren's hiring exemption failed to open doors. The frustration the mounted after two years at think tanks and federal contractors was part of the reason I was ready to leave the government path and start a new career.

- 177. I would have liked to have received more support in finding a job position to fulfill my service requirement.
- 178. I was not able to obtain a permanent position in a government occupation and spent 8 months unemployed after fulfilling my service obligation with a temporary position deployed overseas. I applied for approximately 200 or 300 jobs in government intelligence, international affairs, language, or analysis-related positions with only two interviews, even after 16 years in the [redacted] - over 6 years in redacted. I now switched my career field to [redacted] and am studying [redacted].

## Both

- 179. I don't think enough hiring authorities know about the scholarship. When I spoke to most recruiters or hiring authorities I often had to explain the details of the scholarship. Once they knew, they were impressed. Having a scholarship listed on a resume always helps, but if hiring authorities knew more, comparatively, they might pick a Boren scholar over another applicant with a scholarship listed on their resume.
- 180. I had no idea how to use/access the special hiring authorities for the Boren program within the government. I met my service requirement by luck really, as I accepted a position with an NGO I was interested in, and was able to work on USG funded programs.
- 181. I think it's important that scholars/fellowship recipients receive support upon completing their studies. I thought it was difficult navigating USAJOBS.gov and trying to figure out what opportunities were available to me. I also think that more agencies need to be educated or made more aware of our scholarship. That way more networking/recruiting opportunities can be made available. DHS would be a great place to have NSEPers.
- 182. I was hired for my first Boren position at DHS via Schedule A but there was no mechanism to convert to regular civil status as there is now- the effect was that I got my current job at Dept. of State w/o anything related to Boren. Despite working as civil service at DHS for 2 years I had no internal

access to State Dept. jobs and was only hired after applying through USA jobs as all other US citizens do, so Boren was zero help in that regard. I still do not understand why, once Boren legislation was adjusted to allow conversion from Status A to civil service as PMFs have always been able to do, no one at Boren thought to grandfather in existing Boren fellow alums who were stuck in professional limbo such as myself and many other Borens who did there fellowship at same time or before me.

183. NSEP and its offerings increased between the time I received the award, and the standards/requirements had loosened. I would have liked to have access to the new resources and less stringent policies and procedures. Apart from that, I think alumni should have the option to remain on the career mailing list after program completion as well as the ability to apply to some of the special job offerings (or the program could separate the two). I also would like to see better ways to meet and network with alum.
184. Studying abroad as a Boren Scholar was by far the most formative experience in my young adult life--an experience for which I owe NSEP a tremendous debt of gratitude. Unfortunately, I found that the interest from federal agencies and contractors in my having had this experience was extremely limited if not nonexistent entirely. What was most disappointing; however, was the romantic notion that we as Boren Scholars were somehow entitled to meaningful and fulfilling careers in international affairs and the subsequent reality of working for various federal contractors whose "mission-critical" and "strategic" solutions included utter incompetency and wasteful spending.
185. The Boren Scholarship really afforded me a great opportunity to study abroad and really immerse myself in another culture. However, the post-Boren landscape of job hunting in a bad economy was troublesome. I didn't see Boren as giving a direct pathway to job opportunities as I thought it would. I assumed I would "cut-the-line" so to speak of other applicants, but I felt I just got lost in the shuffle like everyone else. The Boren service requirement should actively work with the Federal government to hire on Boren scholars as collaboration. Many agencies didn't even understand Schedule A or what being a Boren Scholar really meant. I think with such language skills and foreign exposure, one should get a "Boren" preference so hiring managers understand that such applicants are bringing a different pedigree to the applicant pool (Just like Veterans preference in the DOD). If you work as hard as you do to get awarded the scholarship, live abroad for a year, then can't get a job in the government utilizing your skills, the taxpayer just wasted money on this scholarship and the right people aren't being put in place to help shape future policy for America. My current position waived my Boren service requirement, however, I do not get to utilize any language skills (which have now diminished) nor do I get to engage with the area of expertise in which I studied in college and

experienced firsthand for a year in 2007-2008. I wish it would have worked out differently post-Boren, but I am certainly grateful for being awarded a scholarship that allowed me such an incredible experience abroad.

186. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities I had as a Boren Fellow. My only issue with the program is its failure to connect alumni with actual career opportunities in the government. I was incredibly interested in working for the Federal Government, and despite my hiring privileges, I was unable to find opportunities where I could make those privileges known. Competing with thousands of other candidates on general sites like USA Jobs was a complete waste of time. I remember listening to a panel discuss their experience getting jobs within the government at a Boren alumni event upon my return, and every person on the panel pointed to inside connections, unusual circumstances, or other factors at work that were not applicable to most alumni. Hearing the panel say that 'without inside connections and contacts you won't succeed' was such a letdown. Like many other Fellows, in the end I simply had to take a job outside of the government. It was a terrific opportunity and I have since progressed quickly within the organization and am now part of the senior management team. While the Boren was certainly instrumental in where I ended up, I may never consider the government again at this point, and it seems to me that this is counter to what you would want most alumni to experience. The point of the program should be to place highly educated, well-versed, ambitious and globally minded alumni into government departments that need them. I believe the weakest link in the program lies between the fellowship and the service requirement, and it costs the government a number of outstanding potential candidates. I was hired by an organization that wanted me and made it happen much faster than anything I could have hoped for within the government. My suggestion would be to make the hiring privileges of Boren alums mean something. Fast-track alumni. Find ways to connect Fellows to inside recruiting efforts. Help them bypass general streams of hiring or you will always run the risk of losing what you've invested in to an organization that is much more efficient and eager waiting on the outside.
187. I am thankful for the opportunities that the Boren scholarship provided me in terms of the chance to travel to Washington, DC and to meet other scholarship recipients during the orientation, and the opportunity to study in [redacted] for an academic year fully funded. However, I was rather disappointed with the support services available upon returning from my time abroad. I felt very alone in my job search. The only assistance NSEP provided was a Schedule A certification letter, although it was never clear to me if this letter impacted the agency's decision to hire me. I think this program could be greatly improved by increased assistance with the federal job search process including specific hiring pathways with the priority agencies.

188. Regarding recognition/awareness of Boren within the fed government: I have found that the Boren "brand" is much less well-known than the PMF brand. I believe Boren helped me distinguish myself in the hiring process for PMF, but didn't offer any other hiring advantages. There are too many people in the fed gov't who don't know Boren! Those who do are great, but there are too many who focus only on PMF and don't know how to hire Boren alumni. I think this is where NSEP could focus more attention.
189. State Department HR staff are not as familiar with the Boren program as they should be (especially compared to PMF), which was a definite disadvantage to maximizing hiring authorities & experience. Schedule A was nonetheless critical to my being hired in two consecutive DOS positions. Boren staff were helpful in trying to address HR issues.
190. I highly value the experience that the Boren Scholarship and NSEP provided me. The cultural immersion, experiences, and exposure to a foreign language were extremely beneficial. I had high hopes of being able to return to America, apply to positions, and be able to find a position matching my degree [redacted] within a reasonable amount of time: 1-2 years. However, after three years, I am a [redacted] at the [redacted] where I started as a [redacted] in which a degree was not a requirement to apply; my Schedule A: Disability was the hiring schedule selected by HR to hire me. I have submitted over 300 applications in the public and private sectors with around 100 of those applications being related to the service requirement and positions that would have certainly fulfilled the requirement. I would have fulfilled a lifelong goal of serving our country, as my father did in the [redacted], but which I could not emulate due to [redacted]. I had a passion to protect our country from security threats, but now I work in a position that [redacted]. I visited two Agency campuses in DC for hiring events (2012 & 2013) with NSEP, observed a revolution in 2010, and speak [redacted] with a background in [redacted] and a degree in [redacted]. It was suggested that I pursue a Graduate degree, but cannot afford to do so without a full-time job. As a result, I will probably not pursue a career in the government, but will seek better opportunities elsewhere. I attempted to utilize all of the tools provided by NSEP and the special hiring authority to the best of my ability and reached out to the offices of NSEP multiple times for advice. The trips to DC cost me substantially for the income that I currently have, in the hopes that I would be able to affect some outcome that my applications had failed to achieve. Again, I am thankful that I was awarded the scholarship and continue to value the experiences that it allowed me to have, but I simply have not been able to achieve any real results professionally after completion of the scholarship. It is an extremely valuable program that deserves more credit than it gets from Federal Agencies.

191. The Boren Program does not have enough name recognition within the Federal Government. Moreover, the current budget environment does not support the hiring of Boren scholars/fellows. I encountered many agencies on hiring freezes. I felt forced to accept a position that does not utilize my language or area expertise, and thus they have declined over time. The budget environment in the Federal Government forced my office to zero-out training funds, which I was told could be used to sustain my Arabic when I was hired. The NSEP program needs to do a much, much better job in placing Boren alumni where they can contribute, maintain, and develop the expertise that, supposedly, are in high demand. The help I received from the Boren office included instructions to "cold call" the Department of State, which was not particularly helpful. Further, I wish that Boren alumni were eligible to use special hiring throughout their career, as I saw opportunities later - after I had gained government experience - that may have been a better fit. As it is, I am in a government job that does not relate to my area of expertise. I am glad to serve the USG, and I'm grateful for the experience that the NSEP Fellowship provided me - experiences I never could have achieved without the fellowship. The service requirement is a very stressful part of the process, and the entire burden is on recent graduates to secure positions that are notoriously difficult to land. More thought and work needs to be done to make this fellowship an on-ramp for talented young people who want to serve their government.
192. The Boren program was a wonderful experience and offered me an opportunity to broaden my educational and personal perspective. My experience after completing my Boren project, however, (i.e. looking for relevant work to fulfill my service requirement) was a great disappointment. I don't think the placement results of the Boren program would meet the expectations of those who originally conceived the program or many of those who were recipients of the award(s). Too often I have heard of Boren recipients fulfilling their service requirements by performing irrelevant work that does not even allow them to use their new knowledge and language skills learned from their Boren experience. It is understatement to say the Boren Scholars and Fellows Programs receive little recognition among federal hiring authorities. From my experience, veterans and returned Peace Corps. volunteers enjoy greater recognition among hiring managers. While this is well deserved for their service already to our nation, they, unlike Boren recipients, do not need to fulfill a service requirement. A greater emphasis should be placed on helping educate federal agencies about the purpose of the Boren program, the language and regional expertise that Boren award recipients have, and the special status afforded to the Boren recipients. Developing and securing a pipeline of jobs which require skills that Boren recipients have would be a fantastic start. The NSEP program should also help recipients find job placement on an individual basis rather than circulating job postings that can be found on [usajobs.gov](http://usajobs.gov). With only 2 NSEP career specialists assigned to help hundreds

of Boren job seekers fulfill their service requirements, offering individual help becomes nearly impossible. These NSEP specialists serve the purpose of communicating to Boren service requirement seekers about deadlines and submitting periodic SAR reports; they did little to actually help us find suitable jobs that align with the mission of the Boren program within a year's time. The resources afforded to recipients in terms of finding work that benefits the government is paltry compared with the funding awarded for language and study abroad components. When Boren award recipients are unable to fulfill their service requirement, the greatest loss is not to the individual but to the Federal Government and ultimately, the tax-payers who fund these national programs.

193. Boren was a remarkable experience, and it enabled me to apply for DFP. However, it had no impact on my hiring, and actually seems to be viewed negatively by several agencies because of the amount of time I was overseas.
194. I'm glad I completed my Boren Fellowship and am grateful I had the opportunity to do what I did with it. However, I don't believe having "NSEP/Boren" on my resume has assisted very much with where I am in my career.
195. When I received the Boren Award, there was an understanding that the NSEP office would provide more guidance and support in the hiring process. I found it nearly impossible to find a job after graduating with a Master's degree and the Boren office was of little to no help. At the end of the day, I'm glad that I received Boren funding, but it was not helpful to my career overall.
196. I was lucky to get a job at DoD, but nobody in HR knew anything about the alleged hiring preference given to Boren recipients. I think the relevant language should be strengthened to make this more akin to veteran/spouse preference. As it stands now, I don't think it helps a whole lot at most agencies. There's no way I could have had the long-term experience in China that I did without this scholarship, and I'm extremely grateful for that. It had a dramatically positive impact on my life, even though I ultimately decided to attend medical school rather than remain in the Federal government.
197. I would not have made it into the Department of State's Bureau of [redacted] without the Schedule A hiring exemption for Boren Scholars/Fellows -- and I am exceptionally grateful for that. However, I came to State in fall 2008 -- before the 2010 legislation was passed -- and based on the regulations, I could not be 'grandfathered in' to become a full-time, career-track civil servant and was unable to apply for positions on USAJOBS non-competitively. The amount of time, energy, stress, and

money that has gone into keeping my job, and progressing in my career, is astounding. Very few people at State really know what the Boren is, particularly Foreign Service managers. There are no defined Boren regulations set out by the State Department's Bureau of Human Resources, which means that each Boren is treated differently depending on which Bureau the person is hired into. At one point, I was without health insurance for months because NEA/SCA/EX/HR did not know how to process my health insurance claim as a Schedule A Boren... and the Boren office was really unhelpful in getting the issue resolved. Educating the State Department on what the Boren program is, what the hiring authorities mean, and helping State develop consistent human resources protocols would be immensely helpful and benefit everyone. The amount of energy I've put into becoming a career civil servant has kept me from pursuing higher-profile career opportunities, including an offer of a directorship on the National Security Staff. Beyond my personal challenges, I also think there should be a broader interpretation of what fulfills the 'service requirement' -- for example, why doesn't service/working for the State Department's Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program count towards the service requirement?

198. Studying in [redacted] was the experience of a lifetime, and I am very grateful to have received a Boren Award. The one area I feel is a bit lacking is career support post-award. I am speaking mostly from conversations I have had with other Boren award recipients because I was very fortunate to find my position quickly after returning to the U.S. I have had very little contact with the NSEP office other than the occasional email, so I can't really comment on staff support or career counseling first-hand.
199. I would have been nice to receive more support from the administration office, but I felt that the program was generally very well run and I had great experiences in working abroad.
200. Post-fellowship support/networking seems to be best for those located in the DC area. I would like to see networking opportunities for those located on the West coast (San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Monterey).
201. I could not be more grateful for the opportunities the Boren Scholarship gave me in terms of studying abroad and dramatically improving my [redacted] (one example of many: I've tested at 3+ on the DLPT listening and reading 2 years in a row). For the record, I have never received hiring preferences or even met a hiring manager who knew what the NSEP programs were. NSEP has paid off for me solely because of what I learned, but I would note that I have never been able to make use of the program's full potential.



202. Increased diversity in job and networking opportunities would be helpful outside of very conventional national security opportunities. There are many more opportunities available, including the one I found to fulfill my service requirement and future interests, but not due to help from NSEP. Thank you very much for the opportunity. It was a very worthwhile experience I otherwise would not have had the opportunity to pursue.
203. With declining budgets, it's becoming increasingly hard to find / stay in relevant jobs that Boren prepares students for. I got into federal service in 2011-2012, and I barely got in. Also, I had to work a rather menial job for over a year before even sniffing an opportunity at a job related to the Boren. This is understandable accept the next job I got was terminated after just 4 months. Now I am hobbling along as an executive assistant to an [redacted] and hoping this connection pays off would / should the state department or intelligence agencies (etc.) ever begin hiring again.

## **Neutral (both year groups)**

204. I would have liked to have connected more with other Boren Scholars before I did the Boren and afterwards. I think an initial meeting of the scholars and to learn more about post-placement opportunities would have been a great way to further the connection to the Fellowship.
205. It is really hard to leverage the Boren forum network because there are so many years passed since receiving the award. The cohort now is way too young to have enough in common and I would have little to offer.
206. It would be great if there was continued job assistance for alumni.
207. My experience was unusual in that I was extremely limited in the positions I could apply for upon completion of my degree (my husband was serving in [redacted] and I was forcibly based in [redacted]). After two years of looking unsuccessfully, I accepted a tenure-track position in a security-relevant field, and this was accepted as the fulfillment of my service requirement.



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